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ST. AUGUSTINE: THE HUMAN MIND AS IMAGE OF THE DIVINE

**AUGUSTINE'S
RELATIONSHIP
TO PLOTINUS'
PHILOSOPHY**

Laela Zwollo

**ST. AUGUSTINE: THE HUMAN MIND AS IMAGE OF THE DIVINE;
AUGUSTINE'S RELATIONSHIP TO PLOTINUS' PHILOSOPHY**

Laela Zwollo

Colofon

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ST. AUGUSTINE: THE HUMAN MIND AS IMAGE OF THE DIVINE; AUGUSTINE'S RELATIONSHIP TO PLOTINUS' PHILOSOPHY

Proefschrift ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan Tilburg University op gezag van de rector magnificus, prof. dr. E.H.L. Aarts, in het openbaar te verdedigen ten overstaan van een door het college voor promoties aangewezen commissie in de aula van de Universiteit op woensdag 23 november 2016 om 16.00 uur door Lynda Kathryn Brown, geboren op 12 april 1958 te Dallas, Verenigde Staten van Amerika.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Augustine and Plotinus on Imaging the Divine

What human circumstance is so great that a man will not think little of it who has climbed higher than all this and depends on nothing below?...Why then should he think that falling from power and the ruin of his city are great matters? If he thought that they were great evils, or evils at all, he would deserve to be laughed at for his opinion; there would be no virtue left in him if he thought that wood and stones and (God help us!) the death of mortals, were important, this man....ought to think about death that it is better than life with the body! (Enneads I.4.7.15.23-25)¹

When Plotinus (204/5-290) wrote these passages, he surely had no inkling that these lines would become legendary more than a century and half later as a motto at the deathbed of one of his most famous readers, St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo (354-430). In the final days of Augustine's life, the Vandals were plundering and destroying his city. His friend and caretaker, bishop Possidius, wrote, 'In the midst of these evils, he was comforted by the saying of a certain wise man'. The saying was posted on the wall above his bed, next to some quotes from the psalms. 'Non erit magnus magnum putans quod cadunt ligna et lapides et moriuntur mortales. He is no great man who thinks it is a great thing that sticks and stones should fall, and that men, who must die, should die.'² Since the middle of the twentieth century, it has been recognized that these words were a free translation of the citation above from the *Enneads* and that this 'certain wise man' was none other than Plotinus. This story reveals something special about the relationship the church father had with the philosophy of the great Neo-Platonist.³ The articulation of that relationship is the goal of this study.

St. Augustine of Hippo was a lover of divine wisdom. He found wisdom in Christ, the bible and in the Catholic tradition which he saw as the foundations of universal truth. Evidently he was also deeply impressed by the truths found in Plotinus' interpretation of Plato, the great Greek philosopher of classical antiquity. The church father's familiarity with Plotinus' work *The Enneads* is well documented in Augustine's major exegetical works.⁴ His assimilation of Plotinian concepts are in particular best represented in his doctrine of the image of God.⁵ This doctrine is derived from Genesis 1.26-27, which states that man was created to God's image. According to the church father, God's image can be found in the highest and most immaterial part of the human soul, the

1 *Plotinus with an English translation* by A.H. Armstrong in six volumes (London: William Heinemann Ltd. / Cambridge University Press, 1967, 1989 revised). Includes Greek text by Henry-Schwyzler.

2 Possidius, *Sancti Augustini Vita* 28.11. Quoted in J. J. McEvoy, "Neo-Platonism and Christianity: Influence, Syncretism or Discernment?" in: T. Finan, V. Twoney (eds.), *The Relationship between Neo-Platonism and Christianity*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1992), 155-170, 155. The English translation is by M. Muller and R.J. Deferrari from: *Early Christian Biographies, The Fathers of the Church*, (New York: Catholic University Press of America, 1953) xv.

3 'Neo-Platonism' is a modern term generally applied to followers of Plato (ca. 428-348 BC) and specifically to philosophers who lived in late antiquity AD. This 'movement' is considered to have begun with Plotinus from the 3rd century and his disciple, Porphyry, persisting until the closing of the Platonic academy in Athens in 529. 'Middle-Platonism' is a collective term referring to Plato's interpreters who lived after Plato and before Plotinus. In this sense, the terms 'Platonism' and 'Platonist' deployed in this study generally refer to Plato's successors; 'Platonic' directly to the thought or works of Plato himself. When Augustine himself uses the term *Platonici*, he means all students or interpreters of Plato, undifferentiated.

4 His major exegetical works, such as *Confessions*, *City of God*, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis* and *The Trinity*, as well as the works in his 'philosophical' period during his stay in Cassiciacum, are primarily geared to an intellectual readership. M. Wisse estimates the readership of *The Trinity* as likely being Platonists or 'borderline Christians' who were considering conversion [*Trinitarian Theology beyond Participation Augustine's De Trinitate and Contemporary Theology* (London, NY: T&T Clark international. 2011) 27]. See also J. Cavadini, "The Structure and Intention of Augustine's *De Trinitate*", *Augustinian Studies* 23 (1992) 103-123.

5 i.e.: I. Bochet, "Imago" in: C. Mayer, et al (eds.) *Augustinus-Lexikon*, (Basel: Schwabe & Co., 1999- 2006) vol. 3, fasc.3/4, 509-520; J.E. Sullivan, *The Image of God, The Doctrine of St. Augustine and its Influence*, (Dubuque, Iowa: Priory Press, 1963).

intellect. This part of the soul seeks transcendent wisdom and to image God perfectly. A great many aspects in Augustine's doctrine correspond to Plotinus' philosophy of imaging especially his depiction of the human intellect as image of the divine Intellect. As such, Augustine's doctrine of the image of God provides justification for pinning the label 'Christian Platonist' onto him. Hence in order to comprehend Augustine's relationship to Plotinus' philosophy, the best place to start is an examination of his doctrine of the image of God, which is why this doctrine forms the nucleus of this research.

This study will explore to what extent Augustine utilized Plotinus' philosophy for his anthropology and psychology in his doctrine of the *imago Dei*. It will delve into Augustine's exegesis of Genesis and particularly into his doctrine of the Holy Trinity. It is in this work *De Trinitate* (from now on *Trin.*) where Augustine fully developed his teaching of the image of God. In order to carry out a functional comparison between the two thinkers, the research terrain will be pared down to focus on a few general elements, namely the themes knowledge and love. It will focus on Augustine's mystagogy, how he depicted the image's ascent to God and how these two elements played an instrumental role.

The primary inquiry deals with identifying which Plotinian concepts Augustine utilized in order to reinforce his doctrine of the image of God and the way in which he integrated them into his biblical reflection. However this inquiry results in an ocean of similarities. The challenge here is determining where the real differences lie and evaluating the numerous correspondences in the doctrines of the two thinkers. The enormous breadth of the results from this inquiry also demands a response to the question: how can we characterize Augustine as a 'Christian Platonist'? Hence, the second major inquiry will be likewise pursued by concentrating mostly on Augustine's conception of knowledge and love from his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* in the soul's ascent to God. This question will be analyzed in light of Plotinus' epistemology and notion of *Eros* in the framework of the human intellect's imaging of the divine and its ascent to God.

The aim to bring the church father's relationship to Plotinus' philosophy into clearer focus demands an accurate and thorough rendition of Augustine's and Plotinus' doctrines, both of which are of great complexity. As such, this study will also furnish an inside view of two of the most influential thinkers of antiquity and Augustine's interaction with his most important non-biblical source. The results of which will contribute to our understanding of the history of ancient philosophy and the formative years of Christianity. The investigation is interdisciplinary, making use of predominantly philosophical and theological secondary sources. It should be stressed that the main interest here is not to judge Augustine's exegetical method, nor his Trinitarian doctrine, nor whether it contributes to the contemporary understanding of the Trinitarian teaching. It will not judge Augustine's capacities as a philosopher, the credibility of his reasoning or his comprehension of his Greek sources.⁶ Nor is it of interest to determine the consequences of Augustine's thinking

6 See John Rist on the background and history of many misconceptions and misunderstandings of Augustine especially in the last century: "Augustine's Spirituality in the Twenty-First Century" in: T. J. van Bavel (ed.), *Saint Augustine* (Brussels: Mercatorfonds, 2007).

-which has been considered an authority on Christian doctrine in the past 1600 years– itself having been so deeply influenced by Plotinus' philosophy.⁷

2. The Organization of Subject Matter in this Study

A study involving the two major philosophers of the later antique period requires pouring through an extremely large quantity of primary sources and secondary literature. Chapter I will highlight certain problematic aspects of this research, illustrating the difficulties involved and will do so according to the order of the chapters. It will show how this investigation fits into the present state of scholarship as well as explicate the focus, methods and approaches for this study.

The research commences in Chapter II with an exposition on Augustine's background with Platonism. It relays Augustine's own words, his story of his initial acquaintance with Platonism in *Confessions* (*Conf.*) and his opinions of various facets of this philosophy. His appraisal is continued in his works: *The City of God* (*Civ. Dei*) and *Trin.* book IV. His points of critique brought to the attention in this chapter will serve as guidelines for the responses to the first inquiry in Chapter VI, the analysis of how Augustine made use of Plotinus' philosophy and which concepts he integrated into his doctrine of the *imago Dei*. In the last section of Chapter II, certain major questions in Augustinian-Plotinian scholarship will be raised, especially concerning which Platonist books Augustine had studied. The first pertains to which Platonist books exactly those were -a question which arises from his remarks on Platonism in *Conf.* VII.9.13. Another controversy concerns which Neo-Platonist, Plotinus or Plotinus' disciple, Porphyry, played a more influential role in Augustine's teachings and in which period of his life.⁸ These questions have dominated Augustinian-Platonist scholarship for at least a century. My study may offer some suggestions or insights into some of these issues, but will not

7 An example of recent critique of Augustine's Platonist orientation is P. Cary's *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self, The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford: University Press, 2000). Cary sees a 'fundamental incompatibility between the ancient contemplative ideal of Platonism and the biblical gospel' (p. 182, note 36) and encourages his readers 'to resist the religious attractiveness of Platonism' (pp. ix-x) -especially its call to turn away from all that is outside the self and focus inward on the soul. Furthermore, Augustine's 'Neoplatonist understanding determines the ultimate meaning of Christian faith.' (p. 41). His Platonist commitments prevent him from affirming that word or sacrament can 'be an efficacious means of grace.' (p. 143). Cary evaluates Augustine's project of the inward turn as being so vitiated by Platonism that these aspects (grace, the hearing of Scripture, preaching and church sacraments) are brushed to the margin.

This researcher is of the opinion that Augustine's doctrine of the image of the Trinity (*n.b.* with its integration of Plotinian elements, *i.e.* its focus on the interiority, the self, *etc.*) offers beneficial and thought provoking Christian perspectives for modern readership.; R. Crouze gives an overview of the scholarly assessment of Augustine's Platonism "*Paucis Mutatis Verbis*" in: *Augustine and His Critics: Essays in Honor of Gerald Bonner*, eds. R. Dodaro and G. Lawless (London-New York: Routledge, 2000), 37-50.

8 There are researchers in the recent past who have argued that it was either Plotinus or either Porphyry as the Platonist who had made the greatest philosophical impact on Augustine's thought. In contemporary research, many scholars are willing to agree that it was likely a combination of both. The following is an example of a recent publication which shows that the two camps seem to still exist: the volume "Augustin: la question de l'image" published in 2009 by editor I. Bochet, containing articles supporting the thesis that Porphyry was the main Neo-Platonist source for Augustine's doctrine of *imago Dei* (*Archives de Philosophie. Recherche et Documentation* Tome 72 (2009), Cahier 2); *E.g.*: I. Bochet »Présentation » and «Le statut de l'image dans la pensée augustiniennne» 195-198, 240-271; S. Toulouse, «Influences néoplatoniciennes sur l'analyse augustiniennne des *visiones*», 225-248.

endeavor to resolve them.⁹ In the last chapter of this study Augustine's appraisal from these works will be evaluated, as to whether his criticism was justified and, in the case his critique applied to Plotinus, if he expressed his criticism adequately.

A full exposition on Plotinus' philosophy of imaging and intellect will be given early on in this dissertation, in Chapter III, in order to facilitate referral to aspects of Plotinus' philosophy while discussing Augustine in the later chapters. This chapter provides an exposition on Plotinus' cosmology, his philosophy of imaging and the intellect as image of God from *The Enneads*. The exposition will accentuate the following three areas: i. Plotinus' conception of the Godhead (The One, Intellect, Soul and *Logos*), ii. the creation of the human being, especially the intellect (as image of the divine Intellect); and iii. Plotinus' theory of Ideas. The divine Ideas play an important role in Plotinus' cosmology in various ways: such as in his depiction of the coming of existence of the world as well as in his epistemology (such as the human image-intellect's understanding of 'material images'). Plotinus' theory of Ideas is also involved in his account of the process of the rational soul or intellect imitating and resembling the Godhead. The discussion of Plotinus' conception of the intelligible world of Ideas and their subsequent contemplation by the human intellect continues in the final section in Chapter III on Plotinus' description of the ascent of the soul to its ultimate origin. The contemplation of Ideas generally entails two 'routes' of the ascent: acquiring divine knowledge and experiencing divine love and beauty. The topics discussed in this chapter are of particular importance because precisely the same topics occur in Augustine's doctrine of the image of God, albeit in a different formulation. It is of importance to underline the conviction that the only way to truly follow Augustine's line of thought in his doctrine of the *imago Dei*, as well as the difficult and complex books VIII-X of *Trin.* which are allied to it, is through commitment to a profound and careful examination of Plotinus' philosophy.¹⁰ In order to understand Augustine, we should be able to fully grasp the beauty and attraction in Plotinus' philosophy which is highly complex and rich in nuances.¹¹

The subsequent chapters are devoted to Augustine's doctrine of the image of God. First it is treated in the context of his commentaries on Genesis (Chapter IV) particularly *De genesi ad litteram libri dodecim (Gen. litt)* and then in his work *Trin.* (Chapter V). The division of the material in these chapters as such is based upon chronological considerations. *Gen. litt.* was published earlier than *Trin.*, however the completion of the final books of *Gen. litt.* (especially Book XII) overlaps his writing of some of the first

9 This study will ultimately point to the fact that Augustine studied and remained deeply interested in Neo-Platonist philosophy throughout the course of his life. It is often still claimed that Augustine mainly read Plotinus (and/or Porphyry) around the time of his conversion and then perhaps for a few years thereafter during his philosophical *otium* at Cassiciacum. At the time of his ordination in 391, he concentrated on bible studying and thereby supposedly ceased reading Platonist philosophy. (A.M. Bowery "Plotinus *The Enneads*" in *AttA*, 654-657.) Yet as Augustine himself clearly demonstrates in *Civ. Dei*, a work composed in his mid-career, he had studied Platonism much further since his writing of *Conf.* His last major work, *Trin.*, is also full of evidence of having studied Neo-Platonism.

10 Finding literature on the influence of Plotinus, Plato or Platonism on Augustine is not difficult -the number of titles seem infinite. My observation is that the majority of this literature has been written by authors with little expertise in ancient Greek philosophy. Many remarks made in these studies are based upon those of established experts, yet thoughtlessly copied without understanding their full depth or context. Or they are not justified or sufficiently explained and therefore are inaccurate and misleading. For this reason, a rigorous selection of literature must be made for this study.

11 We could even say that Augustine imitated Plotinus in this respect-his analyses often being so ambitious to attain truth that they reach the point of the paradoxical or aporetic.

books of *Trin.*¹² With the chapters of the dissertation organized in this way, it will be possible to show the doctrinal developments in the latter part of Augustine's life. These chapters mirror the organization of Chapter III on Plotinus to the extent it is possible. That means that Chapters III-V are divided roughly in four sections: the cosmology (the general context in which imaging is explained), the Godhead, the image of God (intellect) and its ascent back to God. The organization in this way will facilitate the comparison of the two thinkers in Chapter VI.

Chapter IV begins with a general exposition of his exegesis of the creation story in the book of Genesis in which his interpretation of Genesis 1:26-27 ('*Let us create man to the image of God*') or his view of the creation of the human soul, is embedded. Augustine's doctrine of creation is of relevance to this study for several reasons, mainly because he establishes certain distinctions there which remain of importance to his overall doctrine of the image of God. A few examples are: the differentiation between the physical body and the soul, between the physical sense world and the divine realm, and between creatures and the Creator. But most of all, we see in his doctrine of creation a direct indebtedness to many aspects of Plotinian cosmology, for instance: the Neo-Platonist's theory of the causal Ideas, of their subsequent images as well as their *logoi*, detectable in Augustine's terms, the *rationes*. Moreover, it is the process of imaging in Plotinus' philosophy which forms the foundation of Plotinus' notion of the intellect as image of God (the divine Intellect), which is echoed in Augustine's doctrines of creation, the image of God and the image of the Trinity.

The chapter will proceed to Augustine's specific treatment of the interpretation of the *imago Dei*, primarily from books III and XII of *Gen. litt.* This treatment will be supplemented by passages from other Genesis commentaries. Augustine's doctrine of the image of God as it pertains to his doctrine of creation is important to this study because it lays the foundation for his elaboration of the same doctrine in *Trin.* In *Gen. litt.* Augustine extensively defines his term 'intellect', which is assumed in *Trin.* to be already understood. Thus the most salient elements in *Gen. litt.* return in different contexts in *Trin.*, yet rarely do they undergo change.¹³ (If they do, it is only in minor details.¹⁴) His doctrine of the image of God in *Trin.*

12 Hombert's dating of *Gen litt.*: books I-IIIb: 404-405; IIIb-XII: 412-414 [P.-M. Hombert, *Nouvelles Recherches de Chronologie Augustinienne*, (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2000), 45-80] This differs from Hill's: Augustine's commencement of writing was in 399-401 or even 404; the work was published in 416. [E. Hill, *On Genesis: A Refutation of the Manichees, Unfinished Literal Commentary on Genesis, The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Introductions by M. Fiedrowicz; translation and notes by E. Hill, J.E. Rotelle (ed.), (New York: New York City Press, 2000) 164.]

Hombert's dating of *Trin.*: Book I: 400-403, (evidently thereafter a pause) Books II-III: 411/412-413; Book IV: 414-415; Books V-VII were written from 416 onward. Book VIII was finished between 416-418. Books XIIb (chapters 14 and 15) to book XV: after 420 but before 426-427.

13 I will not be treating the entire development of Augustine's doctrine of the image of God in this study. Instead I refer here to those who have already attempted this, such as: Sullivan, *The Image of God*; J. Heike, *St. Augustine's Comments on "Imago Dei"* (An anthology of all his works exclusive of *De Trinitate*) Collected, edited with critical notes and analytically presented by Rev. J. Heike, in *Classical Folia Supplement III (Augustinian Ideas that have Dominated the West)*, April 1960; R. Markus, "Imago' and 'Similitudo' in Augustine", *REAug* 10, 1964, 125-43; G.A. McCool, "The Ambrosian Origin of St. Augustine's Theology of the Image of God in Man", *Theological Studies*: Volume 20 (1959), 62-81; T. A. Fay, "Imago Dei Augustine's Metaphysics of Man", *Antonianum* (49) 1974, 173-197. The most recent studies are by: J. Torchia, *Restless Mind Curiositas & the Scope of inquiry in St. Augustine's psychology* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2013) Chapter 7; J. Lagouanère, *Intériorité et réflexivité dans la pensée de saint Augustin. Formes et genèse d'une conceptualisation*, (Paris: Turnhout, 2012); and G. Boersma, *Augustine's Early Theology of Image A Study in the Development of Pro-Nicene Theology* (Oxford: University Press, 2016).

14 An example: the most significant change he made concerned the image of God after the fall of Adam. In his early and middle phases of his life, Augustine asserted that Adam's sin had caused the *imago Dei* to be lost (e.g.: *Gen. litt.* VI.27.38). He later corrected himself in *Retractationes* and *Trin.* by saying that the image of God can never be lost only deformed. Sullivan marks the change to have taken place around 412 (*Image God*, 43). I consider this a minor detail because Augustine apparently never pursued examining what kind of consequences the loss of the image in humans would have for his other doctrines (such as predestination). Another minor example: in *Gen. litt.* Augustine wrote that after the resurrection in the afterlife, humans will become equal to the angels in that they will acquire the perfect knowledge which the angels already have (IV.23.40, 24.41; VII.21.30). In *Trin.* Augustine specified that the perfected images will be equal to the angels and also to Christ, but not divine (XIV.18.24).

is supplemented with ‘new’ elements, elements which often derive from other works. What is essentially ‘new’ in *Trin.* is his impressive synthesis of his theology of the image of God. *Trin.* was completed in the last decade of his life, thus it is aptly regarded as representing the culmination of his doctrine. Because this work contains his most extensive and profound reflections on the image of God and the human mind, it occupies the most space in this dissertation. Chapter V is devoted exclusively to his elaboration of the *imago Dei*, as he evolved it to its signification of *imago Trinitatis*.¹⁵

Trin. is a difficult work which demands long term, careful study, reflection and repeated study. In the works of many reputable researchers of Augustine’s Trinitarian doctrine, misconceptions and oversights easily occur in the citations of Augustine’s assertions.¹⁶ In addition to this, older studies of *Trin.* contain many stereotypes which are slowly being replaced by more recent research.¹⁷ Hence this study will contribute to Augustinian scholarship by providing a complete and accurate interpretation of Augustine’s doctrine of *imago Trinitatis*, accompanied by the Plotinian elements. There is simply a need for it.¹⁸ Due to the extensiveness and complexity of Augustine’s doctrine of the image of God in *Trin.*, this research is only able to devote close attention to a small portion of this whole: to the elements of knowledge and love. These themes are likewise the most relevant for studying the Plotinian influence, that is, Plotinus’ epistemology and his depiction of the ascent by love to God, which were valued by Augustine and woven intricately into his complex Trinitarian synthesis. Chapter V begins with a general summary of Augustine’s conception of the Godhead, followed by a summary of his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* and subsequently, an in-depth study of the aspects of knowledge, truth and love from *Trin.* VIII-X and XII-XIII. The elements knowledge and love will be treated in relation to the following three facets: (i.) the image-intellect and its objects (the Ideas, God), (ii.) the Godhead which it images, as well as (iii.) the ascent.

The aspects of knowledge and love in Augustine’s doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* represent the key objects of this study and for this reason, they merit further delineation here. In *Gen. litt* book III, Augustine emphasizes the necessity of obtaining knowledge *n.b.* divine knowledge in order for the image-intellect to obtain a progressive resemblance of God. In *Trin.*, he evolves the element of knowledge in books VII-XV much further into a complete epistemology. His combination of the element knowledge with the element love in his exploration of the human mind in *Trin.* VIII-X

15 The term *imago Dei* is used in both *Gen. litt* and *Trin.* Both designate the human intellect. However, in order to differentiate Augustine’s treatment of *Gen.* 1:26-27 in these works, I often use *imago Dei* to designate his doctrine in *Gen. litt* and then *imago Trinitatis* for his doctrine in *Trin.* Augustine seems to use the term *imago Dei* just as often as *imago Trinitatis* in *Trin.*, although his aim in the latter is to explain how the intellect is triune and how it can generally reflect the triune Godhead. Thus *imago Dei* can serve as a synonym for *imago Trinitatis* yet this does not necessarily apply the other way around.

16 e.g. see Sullivan’s seminal study on the *Image of God*, p. 146, where he deals with Augustine’s depiction of the Holy Trinity as divine *Memoria*, *Intellegentia* and *Amor* (*Trin.* XV.23.43). Sullivan fails to point out here the extremely important remarks of Augustine following his treatment, that these characteristics are merely comparisons (=analogies) for the sake of understanding how the image mirrors the divine (*Trin.* XV.25.45). M. Clark, in her commendable summary “*De Trinitate*” CCA 91-102 writes on pp. 91 and 98 that Augustine speaks of “uniting with God”. Yet Augustine only mentions in one place in *Trin.* that humans can unite with God (*Trin.* XIV.14.20). He never claims a total unification with the Holy Trinity. [He does say that we long to be with God, that our longings will take us to God and that God’s love fulfills us, yet he describes human contact with God in the greater part of *Trin.* more in terms of participation in God’s Light (*n.b.* through Christ) or enjoying God or becoming happy through God. Augustine emphasizes that true union cannot occur in this lifetime (e.g.: on *amor Dei*, *Trin.* XIV.14.18)]

17 R. Williams, in the introduction of E. Bermon, G. O’Daly, (eds.), *Le De Trinitate de Saint Augustine Exégèse, logique et noétique*, (Paris: Institut d’Études Augustiniennes, 2012) vii-viii.

18 For example, R. Markus’ widely consulted article from 1964 on the development of Augustine’s notion of image stops before the *Trin.* and is therefore drastically incomplete (“*Imago Similitudo*”). Even O. du Roy’s mammoth study on Augustine’s Trinitarian doctrine does not go as far as *Trin.* [*Intelligence de la Foi en la Trinité selon Saint Augustine, Genèse de sa théologie trinitaire jusqu’en 391*, (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1966)]. The same applies to Heike’s inventory (*St. Augustine’s Comments on “Imago Dei”*).

represents a remarkable doctrinal development. In these books he underscores the notion that all knowledge and truth is impossible without some form of love: self-knowledge is impossible without self-love and vice versa. Further, Augustine sees the elements of one's mind, knowledge and love as fused into a unified, inseparable human trinity. He posits that acquiring knowledge of God and assimilating love of God are the two ways to become a perfect image of God, to ascend to God or become godlike. Additionally, the element love in the doctrine of the *imago Dei* plays an instrumental role in Augustine's expansion of his doctrine as to whom or what the intellect images. In *Gen. litt.*, Augustine demonstrates that the intellect images the Creator, the Word of God or Christ, who possesses the eternal Ideas. Yet in *Trin.*, he explores how the intellect images the entire Holy Trinity, which necessarily includes God the Father and the Holy Spirit, the latter of which he designated as divine Love and Will. As such, Augustine evolves his doctrine of the *imago Dei* in such way that knowledge and love both became the major support pillars of his anthropology as well as his image of God theology.

Chapter VI consists of an extensive analysis of the similarities and differences in Augustine's and Plotinus' doctrines of the intellect-image of God. Here all the most important points from the foregoing chapters will be reiterated. This comparison proceeds along the lines of four main specific contexts: their conceptions of the Godhead (i.); and the intellect which it images (ii.). The latter deals primarily with epistemology and psychology. Theme (iii.) is focused on love as it relates to the image of God and (iv.) is the aspect of the ascent of the soul to the Godhead. The purpose here is to identify which Plotinian concepts left their imprint most on Augustine's thought. Yet more important is establishing where the essential differences between the two thinkers lie. To assist this examination, Augustine's public comments on what he deemed attractive or objectionable in Plotinus' philosophy, the subject matter of Chapter II, will be consulted. Chapter II clearly illustrates that Augustine was not just an opponent or critic of Platonism, he also extended much praise to Platonist doctrines where he believed it was merited. The analysis in Chapter VI will reveal however that his reactions to Platonist thought were certainly not limited to his published remarks. The examination of his borrowing of Plotinian concepts will unearth implicit critique or positive estimation which also tell us a great deal about his attitudes towards Plotinian philosophy. The goal here is to provide a response to the first inquiry and to determine *the way in which* Plotinus' influence contributed to the development of Augustine's doctrine of the intellect-image. Considering the highly nuanced character of Plotinus' as well as Augustine's philosophy, the results are sometimes enigmatic and even surprising.

The illustration of Augustine's use of Plotinus' notion of intellect-image in Chapter VI.3.ii. will automatically corroborate the established scholarly consensus of Augustine's dependence on Plotinus' epistemology and accordingly, of certain treatises from the *Enneads*.¹⁹ Yet it will also produce a number of new insights in this context as well. This enterprise involves certain difficulties. It includes the separation of the elements of love and knowledge which Augustine (unlike Plotinus) so intricately meshed together. It will also necessitate separating 'love' from 'will', which Augustine fused together in *Trin.* as well. This necessary surgical intervention will be profitable in the end, because the element love will tell us a great deal about Augustine's thinking and the choices he made in developing his theology of the *imago Trinitatis* (while he kept Plotinus' notion of *Eros* in mind). The results will supply a much more accurate and refined rendition of the differences between the world view of the two thinkers.

19 On the consensus of *Enneads* V.1, V.3. and V.5: Brachtendorf, (*Struktur*, 20-24, 28-29, 35 note 89); Ayres, (*i.e.: Passionate Intellect*, 263, note 7); J. Pépin, «Le tout et les parties dans la connaissance de la *mens* par elle même (*De Trin.* X,3,5-4,6)» in: Brachtendorf, *Gott und Sein Bild*, 105-126; C. Tornau, "The Background of Augustine's Triadic Epistemology in *De Trinitate* 11-15, A Suggestion" in: Bermon, *Trinitate*, 251-266.

Chapter VII 'Augustine's Christian Platonism' serves as a watershed for all the conclusions presented in this study. The first part of this chapter follows up on the results of Chapter VI, reviewing them in light of Augustine's appraisal of Platonism from Chapter II. This will also include an evaluation of Augustine's appraisal, determining whether his points of critique were well founded. As such these remarks will supplement the response to first inquiry of this study from Chapter VI. Because the results from the analysis in Chapter VI are so plentiful, they will need to be re-considered in the second part of Chapter VII, which provides answers to the second inquiry of this study. The latter entailed producing a clear picture of how should Augustine be characterized as 'Christian Platonist'. There are a number of supplementary ways to approach this question. First we must come to some kind of definition of the term 'Christian Platonism'. Although there is no shortage of this literature on this subject, the ambition here is to arrive at a new and more appropriate viewpoint concerning Augustine's relationship to Plotinus' philosophy, predominantly utilizing the results of this study.²⁰ The major conclusions of this study will be brought together and distilled in section 4.iv. of this chapter.

20 The insights of the following authors will be frequently deployed in Chapter VII: A.H. Armstrong, "St. Augustine and Christian Platonism" in: R.A. Markus (ed.), *Augustine, A Collection of Critical Essays*, (New York: Anchor, 1972), 5-37; A.P. Bos, *Geboeid door Plato. Het christelijk geloof bekneld door het glinsterend pantser van de Griekse filosofie*, (Kampen: Kok, 1996); J.J. McEvoy, "Neo-Platonism and Christianity: Influence, Syncretism or Discernment?" in: T. Finan, V. Twoney (eds.), *The Relationship between Neo-Platonism and Christianity*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1992), 155-170; and J. Rist, "Plotinus and Christian Philosophy" in: L.P. Gerson (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1996), 386-414.

CHAPTER TWO

AUGUSTINE'S RELATIONSHIP TO PLOTINUS' PHILOSOPHY

This study is founded upon the premise that the philosophy of the Neo-Platonist Plotinus was of profound influence on Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Dei/Trinitatis*. This assumption in itself has an interesting background and history.¹ Although the history of Augustine-Platonist research will not be dealt with here, it is nonetheless interesting to note that it only got off the ground at the beginning of the 20th century and in the course of the century has drawn up and confronted a number of different issues, many of which have not led to solutions to the satisfaction of all. Considering the Platonist influence in Augustine from another point of view, even today this is not always a welcome subject for all researchers of Augustine's doctrines. There are researchers who deny or choose to ignore the influence of Augustine's Neo-Platonic sources.² There are also theologians who judge Augustine's Platonist affinities as harmful to Christian religious experience.³ In a completely different light, there are also researchers who are engaged with 'Augustine the philosopher' who assert that it was Porphyry and not Plotinus who was Augustine's Neo-Platonist source.⁴

Although this study will not confront all these controversies, it will deal directly with the material which is often the starting point for these issues: Augustine's own commentary on Platonism. These are scattered throughout his whole oeuvre.⁵ Sometimes they occur in short passages, such as in *De beata vita* (1.4), but his major treatments are concentrated in *Conf.* VII-VIII, *De civitate dei* (*Civ. Dei*) books VIII-X and *Trin.* IV. Augustine's appraisal of Platonism in these latter works will form the focal point of this chapter. It is essential to this study because it will serve as a basis for the analysis concerning the inquiry in Chapter VI: which Plotinian concepts did Augustine borrow in order to reinforce his doctrine of *imago Dei/Trinitatis*? His criticism of Platonism from these works will assist in analyzing why he preferred certain notions and why he rejected others. Secondly, his praise and critique will be taken into consideration when formulating a picture of Augustine as 'Christian Platonist', the main inquiry of Chapter VII.

The first section of this chapter will deal with his descriptions of Platonism, embedded in his autobiography in *Conf.* III-VIII. Here he describes his intellectual development starting with his youth to his membership in the Manichaean church, to his first readings of Platonist literature and then to his explanation of his 'conversion' to the Christianity of his youth. The second section will deal with his extensive commentary on Platonist philosophy in *Civ. Dei* and then his critique in *Trin.* IV.

1 For this overview, see e.g.: R. Kany, *Augustins Trinitätsdenken. Bilanz, Kritik und Weiterführung der modernen Forschung zu "De Trinitate". Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 22*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007) 247-263; R. Rombs, *Saint Augustine and the Fall of the Soul*, (Washington D.C.: Catholic University Press, 2006) 26-27, 28 and 32; F. van Fleteren, "Porphyry" in *AttA*, (1999), 661-663. These deal with *i.a.* the question: what were the *libri platonicorum* which Augustine claimed to read in *Conf.* VII.20.26?

2 An example is the (otherwise excellent) study of E. Morgan, *The Incarnation of the Word. The Theology of Language of Augustine of Hippo* (London, New York: T & T Clark, 2010) who states in note 11, p. 28 of Chapter 1: '...Simonelli's work stands in direct contrast to the more Neo-Platonically sympathetic discussions of the relationship between Augustine's Trinitarian thought and Neo-Platonism, for example J. Brachtendorf's *Struktur Geist* ...My own position also stands generally in opposition to the Neoplatonic sympathies of Brachtendorf.' (LZ: see the complete bibliography in this study: *n.b.*, J. Brachtendorf's study is a major secondary source used in the Chapter V of this dissertation on Augustine's *imago Trinitatis* and the influence of Plotinus.)

3 Such as P. Cary, see note 6 in Chapter I.

4 Such as P. Hadot, W. Theiler and I. Bochét in the context of questions addressed in notes 47, 50 and 66.

5 Plotinus is mentioned by name in the following works: *Contra Academicos* III.18.41; *De Beata Vita* 1.4; *Soliloquia* I.4.9; *Ep.* 6.1; *Ep.* 118.33; *Civ. Dei* VIII.12; IX.10, IX.17, X.2, X.14, X.16, X.23 (2x).

1. Augustine's Accounts of Platonism in Confessions

Augustine's story of how he had initially come into contact with Platonist literature in books III–VII of *Confessions*⁶ is of particular interest to this study because it contains his descriptions of the different ideologies which he encountered in his late twenties up to the time he embraced Catholicism.⁷ These aspects of his intellectual development are indispensable for understanding not only his attraction to Platonism but also for understanding facets of his conversion, which in turn are relevant to his doctrinal development of the *imago Dei/Trinitatis*. The first part of this chapter will commence with the period of his life as a young member of the Manichaean church and with a short exposition on Manichaeism. The elements which attracted Augustine to Manichaeism in the first place and why he later rejected it, to be discussed here, are instrumental for gaining insight in what later attracted Augustine to Platonism. After dealing with his Manichaean past, the narrative will proceed to his first alleged readings of the Platonist books and his positive reactions to certain philosophical concepts. His subsequent disappointment with Platonism spurred him onward to search further for ultimate truth and wisdom elsewhere, which he discovered while attending mass in the Catholic church in Milan in the pastorate of bishop Ambrose. Hence his encounter with Platonism represents a significant link in this chain of events. The Platonist conceptions which he told to have embraced in his accounts in *Conf.* will remain with him for the rest of his life. This exposition on his intellectual development and his critique of Platonism will follow the same chronological order of his autobiography⁸ as relayed in *Conf.*

1.i. Before encountering Platonism: Augustine and Manichaeism

1.i.a. Augustine's Youth

As a boy, Augustine had a complete classical Liberal Arts education as well as a Catholic upbringing stimulated by his mother Monica.⁹ He was never a pagan or an atheist. During his school years in Carthage, which he described as full of debauchery, he attended mass regularly. Here he met the Christian mother of his future son, Adeodatus. He was accustomed to praying to Christ and from an early age he was officially registered as catechumen of the Catholic church. By age 19,¹⁰ he had

6 *Confessionum libri XIII*; CCL 27, English translation: H. Chadwick, *Confessions by Augustine*, with introduction and notes by H. Chadwick, (Oxford: University Press, 1992, re-issued 2008). [*Conf.* was written between the years 397–401. P. Brown's chronology: *Augustine of Hippo, A Biography*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 182]

7 Literature on Augustine's autobiography in *Confessions* I–IX: J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon, A Study into Augustine's City of God and the Sources of his Doctrine of the Two Cities*, (Leiden: Supplement to *Vigiliae Christianae*, 1991) 21–57, 199–229, 235–253; P. Brown, *Augustine* (ed. 2000), 7–12.

8 Researchers have questioned the historicity of certain autobiographical elements of *Conf.* (e.g.: Boissier and Harnack 1888, Courcelle 1950) suggesting that the story of his conversion is a reworking of ancient literature traditions. For an overview of this debate, see A. Kotzé, *Augustine's Confessions: Communicative Purpose and Audience*, (Leiden: Supplement to *Vigiliae Christianae*, Brill, 2004) 11–12; J.J. O'Meara, "Augustine's Confessions, Elements of Fiction" in: J. McWilliam (ed.) *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier Press, 1992) 77–95; O'Donnell discusses "...Augustinian self-fashioning, the way the mature Augustine created his own literary and public persona, attached to it a highly selective account of his early life, and both maintained and propagated that persona into succeeding generations". (J.J. O'Donnell, "Three Studies in Augustinian Biography" 1999: <http://faculty.georgetown.edu/jod/augustine/newlife.html>.); The question of whether his 'autobiography' is truly an autobiography or fictional has marginal relevance for this study.

9 The core beliefs of the church of Augustine's youth as summarized by Bowery: the Incarnation, the resurrection, the soul's sinfulness, the promise of redemption from sin through grace, the personalization of the divine, the sustainability of communion with God through Jesus Christ and the conception of the Holy Trinity. A.M. Bowery, "Plotinus the *Enneads*" in: *AttA*, 654–657.

10 The year was 373. In autumn of this year he became a professor in Thagaste, offering lessons in grammar and rhetoric.

become a talented, promising professor of rhetoric. While reading Cicero's work *Hortensius*, he became deeply impressed by this author's conception of true happiness. Cicero expounded that this cannot be found by pursuing worldly ambitions as fame and honor (which were indeed Augustine's goals at that time), but only by searching for immortal wisdom. True life according to Cicero was not the world as perceived by the senses but that of the inner world of the mind. Reading Cicero's work represented a milestone in Augustine's life: it awakened in him the longing for more profound knowledge and subsequently, the search for this became Augustine's new goal in life. To begin this search, he, as catechumen, naturally turned to the Holy Scriptures (*Conf.* III.5). Yet in contrast to Cicero's refined and erudite account, the style and language of the bible came across to him as primitive and lacking dignity, certainly not the place for him to seek eternal wisdom (V.6.10). Nonetheless, Augustine regretted that Cicero's exposition on wisdom did not include (and of course could not have included) the name of Christ.

One thing alone put a brake on my intense enthusiasm – that the name of Christ was not contained in the book. This name, by your mercy Lord, this name of my Savior your Son, my infant heart had piously drunk in with my mother's milk, and at a deep level I retained the memory. Any book which lacked this name, however well written or polished or true could not entirely grip me. (Conf. III.7.8)¹¹

In 373, he became acquainted with some followers of the Babylonian prophet Mani (ca. 216-276) in his hometown Thagaste, who gave him the distinct impression that these teachings could offer him the immortal sagacity he was looking for. Their wisdom, which indeed exceeded earthly concerns, encompassed -among other things- the teachings of Christ, a critical interpretation of the bible as well as a synthesis of various world religions of the day.¹² Young Augustine was so sold that he became an auditor three days later and remained as such for nine years (up until he was about 28 years old in 382).

Now we will take a closer look at Manichaeism in the brief exposé below. But first a few introductory remarks on Augustine's commentary on this religion. In *Conf.* Augustine gives us a full-scale report on what he rejected in the teachings of Mani. He wrote his autobiography (397-401: dating is Brown's) while in function as bishop of Hippo, in the midst of his own debates with Manichaeans.¹³ At this time, he was a fiery opponent of Manichaeism. Augustine expresses little praise for Manichaeism; what praise he would have had must be inferred, as articulated below in this section (in for example 'Attractive elements of Manichaeism for Augustine'). In *Civ. Dei*, which will be consulted in section 2, Augustine presents himself as an avid opponent of certain aspects of Platonism as well. Yet in comparison to his treatment of the Manichaeans in *Conf.*, Augustine was generous in his praise for the Platonism. Because he shows us clearly in *Conf.* the role Platonist philosophy played in his rejection of the tenets of the Manichaean sect, the following exposition on Manichaeism will highlight the perspective of Augustine's Platonistic affiliation. (This perspective will be discussed in the upcoming subsections.)

11 Unless otherwise indicated all quotes from *Conf.* in this chapter are translations of Chadwick.

12 Manicheans were generally more sympathetic towards the New Testament (*Conf.* III.6.10, V.11.21). The Old Testament, was wholly rejected (*Conf.* III.7.12).

13 His first anti-Manichaean treatise was: *De genesi contra Manichaeos* (388-389). His last: *Contra Secundinum Manichaeum* (404) (dating is Brown's.)

What follows is a brief summary of Manichaean cosmology.¹⁴ This summary however is not derived from *Conf.*, due to the fact that Augustine does not provide us with a sufficient overview of Manichaean theology in this or any other of his works. It was necessarily composed by weaving together the summaries of a number of researchers on Manichaeism, who have utilized a variety of different ancient authors (such as Manichaeans and from other works of Augustine).¹⁵

1.i.b. Manichaean Salvation and Ascent to the Light

According to the founder, Mani, humans have a mission to fulfill in this world: to contribute to the return of divine light particles to the Realm of Light. The need for this mission is explained in a lengthy, complicated creation myth which was communicated to Mani by divine revelation. The myth, given here in an overly simplified version, is as follows: before our world existed, two forces prevailed: the divine Good and Light on the one hand and matter and darkness on the other. When the dark forces launched an attack on the realm of the Good, war broke out between them. As a result of a battle in this realm, remnants of the divine light were captured in the territory of darkness. Divine beings schemed up strategies and counterattacks which would trick the beings of the dark forces into surrendering the captured light. One of these schemes involved convincing the dark forces of the necessity of creating a world with human beings. These were in fact the products of an evil demiurge and thus created from the dark matter which contained imprisoned light. The overall effect was that all creatures and created things were composed of a mixture of light and darkness, good and evil. Only the sun and the moon were created by the good demiurges of Light. This war would supposedly persist until the end of time, when all light particles will be brought back to the Light Kingdom. Then everything associated with the kingdom of Darkness (which includes all matter and all selfish and aggressive desires) would be rendered entirely inactive.

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- 14 The brevity of this exposé may ultimately raise more questions than can be answered here. What is known about Manichaeism today is based upon reconstructions from a multitude of ancient sources from widespread regions and languages. Augustine's anti-Manichaean works provide much reliable material for this reconstruction, yet raise even more questions as to the exact tenets of this religion. Augustine's information, in particular his evaluation of this religion (as well as that from other church fathers) has been questioned more and more of its validity since the latter half of the previous century (see note 31).
- 15 Secondary literature on Manichaeism: Brown, *Augustine*, 46-60; V.H. Drecoll and M. Kudella, *Augustin und der Manichäismus*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011); A. Hoffman, "Erst Einsehen dan Glauben. Die Nordafrikanischen Manichäer zwischen Erkenntnisanspruch, Glaubensforderung und Glaubenskritik" in: J. van Oort, O. Wermelinger and G. Wurst (eds.), *Augustine and Manichaeism in the Latin West: Proceedings of the Fribourg-Utrecht Symposium of the International Association of Manichaean Studies*, (Leiden: Brill, 2001) (from now on: *A&M Latin West*), 67-112; E. Moore "Gnosticism" and "c. Mani and Manichaeism" in: *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* <http://www.iep.utm.edu/gnostic/> (April 2013); T. O'Loughlin, "The *Libri Philosophorum* and Augustine's Conversions", in: T. Finan and V. Twomey (eds.), *Neo-Platonism and Christianity* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1992), 101-125; K. Rudolph, "Augustinus Manichaicus-das Problem von Konstanz und Wandel" in: *A&M Latin West*, 1-15; J. van Oort, *Jerusalem Babylon* and *idem*, "Manichaeism" in: W.J. Hanegraaff et al (eds.) *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 757-765. "Manichese Kosmologie en Verlossingsleer" in: A.P. Bos (ed.), *Waar haalden de gnostici hun wijsheid vandaan? Over de bronnen, de doelgroep en de opponenten van de gnostische beweging*, (Budel: Damon, 2016) 138-153.
- Besides *Conf.*, various anti-Manichaean works of Augustine are used for reconstructing the Manichaean religion, such as: *Contra Felicem Manichaeum*, *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, *Contra Secundinum Manichaeum*, *Contra Epistulam Manichaei quam vocant fundamenti*, *Confessiones*, *Epistula 7*, *De haeresibus*, *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus manichaeorum*; in addition to these, a few purely Manichaean sources: *Kephalaia*, *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis* (= *CMC* or "*Cologne Codex*"). For a complete treatment of these as well as other Manichaean sources: see i.e.: Drecoll and Kudella, *Augustin*, 15-21; van Oort, *Jerusalem, Babylon*, 33, 201-207. More recently, R. van Vliet *Gnostischer Adoptionismus in der manichaischen Christologie*, Dissertation, VU University, 2014; L. Zwollo, "Manichese Kosmologie en Verlossingsleer" in: A.P. Bos (ed.), *Waar haalden de gnostici hun wijsheid vandaan? Over de bronnen, de doelgroep en de opponenten van de gnostische beweging*, (Budel: Damon, 2016) 138-153.

Manichaeans believed that the particles of light, which had been scattered over the earth during this war, dwell in all things and would be rendered to the Realm of Light by a gradual purification process. This process involved the transport of light particles to the moon. When the moon was full, it would empty these particles into the sun, from where they are elevated to the "new Aeon".¹⁶ The salvation of these particles is the responsibility of humans and is likewise involved with the salvation of humanity. Redemption can begin to take place once a redeemer reveals the truth of the pre-creational circumstances and the human mission in the world. This secret knowledge itself or *gnosis* originates from the Light world, referred to in some Greek texts as *Nous* (spirit, mind or intellect). The universal redeemer could be Jesus or Mani (or another prophet from the past, such as Buddha) who makes known the reality of the formerly unknown Kingdom of Light as mankind's destiny. Equipped with *gnosis*, the individual obtains a new consciousness of the divine spark in the soul which connects him/her to the higher divine world. The individual acknowledges his or her life as a microcosm of this universal duality of light and darkness, good and evil. As Augustine put it, Manichaeans believed that one part of the soul contained this divine light and was good and divine; the other part of the soul was evil and dark.¹⁷

1.i.c. Attractive Elements of Manichaeism for Augustine

Augustine felt attracted to Manichaeism for a number of reasons. Only a few will be discussed briefly in this subsection which are relevant for the discussion of Augustine's relationship to Plotinus' philosophy. These include: Christ as a member of the Godhead, the conception of the soul, their view of evil, self-redemption and obtaining knowledge.

After Augustine had read Cicero and had been set afire in search of immortal wisdom, he criticized Cicero's works for the absence of Christ. Yet he found Christ distinctly present in Mani's religion: as a bringer of *gnosis* and wisdom, a non-physical being of radiant light, manifesting in a visible form in the light of the heavens. This experience of Christ must have enhanced in some way his former experience of God as a Catholic catechumen.¹⁸ In Manichaean theology the soul was the central point of human existence, it was where God, Light and truth (*Nous*) manifested.¹⁹ God was present in the soul at the very least in the form of a divine spark. After being illuminated with Christ's *gnosis*,

16 Cf. e.g.: Ep. 55. The sun and moon were associated with the manifestation of Jesus. Regarding the Manichaean sources as a whole, there were many versions of Jesus –perhaps as many as six or seven, as the sources can vary. The two most frequently occurring were: Jesus as Shimmering Light and as the Apostle of Light. Drecoll and Kudella specify three main Jesus types in the Manichaean cosmology. 1. *Jesus patibilis*: associated with the light particles trapped in matter on Earth, 2. the crucified Christ (who was not of flesh) and 3. Christ as Splendor associated with the sun and moon who was the representative of God's power in the sun (Drecoll-Kudella, *Augustin*, 24-26, 30, note 53, 32). See also: S.G. Richter, "Bemerkungen zu verschiedenen Jesus-figuren in Manichäismus" in: *A&M Latin West*, 174-184.

17 Cf: In *The Two Souls (De duabus animabus)* Augustine described the Manichaean theory of two souls: the two *mentes*: one being good, the other evil. In *Conf.* he identified this theory with their postulation of two *voluntates* in each human (*Conf.* VIII.10.22); Many researchers have commented on the discrepancies between Augustine's descriptions and Manichaean texts. Cf: van Oort, "Manichaean Christians in Augustine's Life and Work" in: *Church History and Religious Culture* 90.4 (2010) 505-546; 524-525; notes 105-110. See also C. G. Scibona, "The Doctrine of the Soul in Manichaeism and Augustine" in: J.A. van den Berg, A. Kotzé, T. Nicklas and M. Scopello (eds.), *In Search of Truth: Augustine, Manichaeism and other Gnosticism, Studies for Johannes van Oort*, (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 377-418.

18 For reconstructions of 4th century North African Christianity: Brown, *Augustine*, 19-27; Van Oort, *Jerusalem Babylon*, 30-31; and Hoffman, "Erst Einsehen", 76-77. See also P. van Geest, *The Incomprehensibility of God, Augustine as Negative Theologian* (Liege, Dudley: Peeters, 2010) 42-45, 49-61 on Augustine's pre-Manichaean and pre-Manichaean conceptions of God.

19 See K. Rudolph, "Augustinus Manichaeus – das Problem von Konstanz und Wandel" in: *A&M Latin West*, 1-15, 3: ("Die Auffassung der Seele als Mittelpunkt des Menschen"); G. Quispel, *Das ewige Ebenbild des Menschen. Zur Begegnung mit dem Selbst in der Gnosis* (Sonderdruck aus *Eranos Jahrbuch XXXVI*), 1967 (Zürich: Rhein Verlag, 1968).

the goal of the Manichaeans was to return as a soul to God, to eternal life and become divine. In Augustine's later writings and in particular in his doctrine of *imago Dei/Trinitatis*, we also see his deep interest in the human soul and the emphasis on the spiritual, non-material aspects of human life through contact with God's illumination. His psychology contains a similar, general soteriological structure as the Manichean psychology described above: God manifests in the human soul in the form of pure Light; by turning inward to this light in one's soul, one makes contact with the divine in some way. The ascent to God is facilitated by assimilating this light, which includes acquiring some kind of knowledge of God and resembling the divine by making oneself good.²⁰ This notion of soul, in spite of Augustine's later criticism of it (such as being consubstantial with divine light), presumably did not leave him cold, at least not at first. The same elements attracted him later to Plotinus' psychology where the soul's ascent to God's Light was explicated in great detail.

The Manichaean way of thinking provided Augustine in his younger years with a ready answer to the question concerning the source of evil *unde malum*. Augustine perceived the Manichaean conception of evil as a distinct, hostile force of matter and darkness which manifested on the same plane of existence as the divine.²¹ It perpetrated itself equally in our world and in humans in the form of aggression and selfish desires. In this period of his life, Augustine found Mani's teaching interesting because -as he himself put it- humans were not considered the cause of evil. Consequently, individuals were acquitted from taking moral responsibility for their own wrongdoings (*Conf.* IV.3.4, V.10.18). The dualistic conception of God as Good and an opposing god as wickedness provided him as well with an explanation for why persons suffer: the benevolent God of Light was responsible for creating the supra-lunar world where all things were good; the dark forces who had created all things below the moon were the cause of egotistic passions and adversity.²² Augustine's later reading of Plotinus' conception of good and evil will change his view, which will be discussed below.

Manichaeans believed that once introduced to *gnosis*, humans possessed adequate insight to be able to diminish their own perpetuation of evil and purify their souls in order to return to God. According to Augustine, total self-control was required in Manichaeism and one's redemption fell essentially into one's own hands (*Conf.* VIII.10.22).²³ This aspect was apparently appealing to him at this time as well.²⁴ He likely also found the Manichaean revelation of *gnosis* and the 'rational'²⁵ character of its religion attractive. Mani claimed to propagate a universal religion with tenets which

20 How can we account for Augustine's 'silent praise' of a particular Manichean tenet? See van Oort, *Jerusalem Babylon*, 54-56; Rudolph, etc.

21 It is not clear however if the Manichaean view always considered the world itself, consisting of coarse matter, as sheer evil. Researchers question as well whether Manichaeans indeed taught that the dark side of humans was pure evil in the way that Augustine depicts their teachings. E.g.: van Vliet, *Adoptianismus*, 2014, Kap. III.

22 e.g.: van Geest, *Incomprehensibility*, 42-43.

23 Self-redemption included doing good works, such as purifying the evil (passions and desires) from the soul, and assisting in rituals in which light would be returned to the Highest God. Cf: e.g.: R. van Vliet, Kap.1.

24 i.e.: van Oort, *Jerusalem Babylon*, 54-56; Augustine's concern with self-control is present in his doctrine of original sin (see Chapter IV.3.iv.b) in which he interprets one of the regretful punishments for the disobedience of Adam and Eve as being the diminished control over the body by the rational mind. Note that his need for self-control is later replaced by the doctrine of grace of the *Verbum Dei* as the sole Redeemer who heals the human will.

25 *Conf.* V.3.6. 'Rational' in the sense that it gave a plausible explanation for reality.

were plausible to intellectuals.²⁶ Augustine sought a religion which would stimulate knowledge. These features led him doubtlessly to Platonism as well.²⁷

1.i.d. Augustine's (Platonist) Critique of Manichaeism

Within the nine or ten years spent as a Manichaean auditor, he gradually began to feel discontent with many of its tenets. This section will highlight several points of critique which he verbalized when writing *Conf.*, which were ultimately decisive in his renouncement of his membership. There are many possible points to discuss here, yet only a handful will be mentioned which will shed light on Augustine's relationship to Plotinus' philosophy and are relevant to the main inquiries of this study. They include his rejection of the Manichaean conception of Godhead, especially as being material, the inadequacy of their Christology, the Manichaean soul -as also being material yet also divine-; their notion of evil, the inherent arrogance of their teachings and finally, his objection to Manichaeism being considered a 'rational religion'.

Augustine criticized his own conception of God while in his Manichaean phase,²⁸ as being materialistic.²⁹ The material factor of Manichaeism,³⁰ he explained, involved the substance of the realms of Light and darkness which possessed spatial dimension -a characteristic generally assumed

26 For discussions of the aspects which lent Manichaeism its reputed rational character, see van Oort, *Jerusalem Babylon*, 178; Drecoll-Kudella, *Augustin*, 28-30; Quispel, *Das ewige Ebenbild*, 20. These seem to point to elements in Greek philosophy or Neo-Platonic ontology or terminology. See Hoffman ("Erst Einsehen" *A&M Latin West*, 77-85, 84-85) and note 27 below. The effort to make this religion appear rational can be seen in the myth itself, where a system is built up in triads, tetrads, pentads, dodecads, etc. (see Hoffman, p.85 note 106) which is nonetheless distinguished from philosophy. Hoffman remarks on the tension in Manichaeism between belief derived from Mani's revelation (*gnosis*) and the alleged rational elements. See also A.H. Armstrong "Dualism: Platonic, Gnostic and Christian" in: D.T. Runia (ed.), *Plotinus amidst the Christians*, (Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, 1984), 29-52.

27 The "rational" aspects in Manichaeism also reveal a certain Platonic influence. Hoffmann reports the influence of Plato's theory of recollection: Manichaean *gnosis* draws up the recollection of the soul and its origins. It becomes "reminded" where it came from and of the misery which it presently faces (the consequences of sinning) and how one's evildoings, committed before *gnosis* was known, can now be made good ("Erst Einsehen", 82-83, 99-100). Cf. *Contra Faustus* 20; Other traces of Platonism include: the teleology of becoming a god (Quispel, *Das ewige Ebenbild*, 39); the Neo-Platonist hierarchy of Being and terminology pertaining to *Nous*, *Psychê*, *Hylê* (see i.e. *Cologne Codex*); the imaging of God by the human soul (see Quispel's speculation pp. 27-28); and the rejection of an anthropomorphic god. The Manichaean view on matter is similar to that of Plotinus in associating matter with potential evil. For further reading on how Plotinus' conception of self can be detected in *Cologne Codex*: see C.L. Sweeney, "Mani's Twin and Plotinus: Questions on Self" in: R. T. Wallis, J. A. Bregman (eds.), *Neo-Platonism and Gnosticism* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 381-422.

28 *Conf.* III.6.10, III.7.12, V.10.18-20, VII.1.1, VII.5.7. See van Geest, *Incomprehensibility*, 42-56 on Augustine's conception of God as Manichaean.

29 *Conf.* III.7.12, IV.7.12, VI.3-4, 4-5, VII.1.1; Augustine's visualization of God in a human form, -such as God the Father meandering in the Garden of Eden as depicted in Genesis,- would likely pertain more to the version he learned in the North African Christianity of his youth. Manichaeans ridiculed Catholics for their anthropomorphic conception of God (*De genesi contra manichaeos* 17.27). When Augustine later heard Ambrose's sermons in Milan, he was surprised to discover that this was not the way all Catholics view God (*Conf.* VI.3.4). Augustine interpreted the depiction of God the Father in the Garden of Eden figuratively in *Trin.* II.10.17.

30 Van Geest, *Incomprehensibility*, 45-46. Van Geest points out that Augustine's material conception of the divine could have been stimulated by his reading of Stoic authors such as Pliny and Cicero in the last years of his Manichaean membership. Their argument for the materiality of God rested upon the thesis that 'without material there could be nothing'. God was spiritual in so far that spirit was conceived as a kind of 'matter'. Consequently, God must be considered as immanent in the world. These ideas would have also contributed to Augustine's rejection of the dualistic Manichaean conception of God.

of matter (*Conf.* VI.1.2).³¹ The Kingdom of Light consisted of fine spiritual material, comparable to the visible light we see in the earthly reality. The light of the sun and the moon were considered manifestations of Jesus Christ's illumination.³² As such Manichaeans revered the light of celestial bodies (*Conf.* III.6.9), perceptible to the physical senses, believing it was divine. They also believed that God's light was encapsulated in plants, which was liberated when consumed and digested (III.10.18). He also saw in Manichaeism not only a dualistic view of God but also the origin of evil in the divine sphere; both conceptions he later rejected adamantly. He argued that the force of darkness in the Manichean account of world history had to be necessarily considered divine and eternal in order to be powerful enough to cause degradation in the divine Realm of Light. He then challenged the Manichean attribution of immutability to the God of Light. If this were so, he argued, then a war would not have been necessary to fend off an attack from evil forces (VII.2.3). He discovered the solution to his objections in Plotinian metaphysics and theology. There, the Godhead (the three Hypostases) have a completely immaterial nature. The highest principle of this Godhead, 'the One' or 'the Good', was the source of all existing things. Consequently all things were inherently good and only in the absence of this divine good, could evil exist. Thus there was no dualism in Plotinus' position on good and evil. This point as well as the importance of divine immateriality for Augustine will be discussed in more detail in 1.ii.b of this chapter.

Another issue for him was the Manichean view of Jesus Christ as a radiating non-physical being of light. Augustine came to see this claim as completely undermining the theological significance of Christ's physical human life on earth as relayed in the New Testament (*Conf.* V.10.20).³³ The Manichean view missed the understanding of the lesson of Christ's humility from having taken on a fully human existence and suffering from injustice. Additionally it missed the significance of Christ taking sins away from the world and forgiving the wrongdoings of individuals (*Conf.* IV.3.4 and V.10.18). Another point of Augustine's critique was that the Manichean Christ was merely a secondary God amidst a pantheon of various other deities and not the central redemptory figure. Augustine will express a similar kind of critique towards Platonists who did not recognize Christ at all. (This is discussed in the section on 'Augustine's Appraisal of Platonism: the Platonist Son of God is not Christ' 1.ii.a.)

Augustine gradually perceived the Manichean Godhead as powerless and hollow. He tells us that the awareness of the Manichean 'highest God' as well as their conception of Christ hardly changed his outlook on life, which was still driven by worldly ambitions, obtaining professional status and sexual gratification. Manichean wisdom turned out to be far from the Ciceronian ideal of immortal and otherworldly wisdom which he still longed for underneath it all. He did come closer to this wisdom in Plotinus' philosophy, albeit partially, in the transcendent Wisdom and Light of the second Hypostasis, the divine Intellect. Manichaeans lacked a conception of Christ as Word of God (*Conf.* IV.11.16-17). However, Plotinus, on the other hand, employed a convincing notion of an eternal 'Son of God' in reference to the Hypostasis Intellect or to the *Logos*. This is an important point which will receive more attention in this chapter, as well as Chapters III, V and VI. Another

31 Augustine's assessment here is contested by a number of researchers. F. Decret interprets the Manichean Kingdom of Light as immaterial and good; the Darkness as pure evil and matter. [*L'Afrique manichéenne (IVe- Ve siècles) Étude historique et doctrinale*, (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1978) e.g.: I, 132]. Drecoll-Kudella and van Oort accept Augustine's appraisal and interpret Manichaeism in the "materialist" way in which Augustine pictures it (*Augustin*, 34-36); van Oort: *Mani, Manichaeism and Augustine The Rediscovery of Manichaeism & its influence on Western Christianity*, (Tbilisi: Academy of Sciences of Georgia, The K. Kekelidze Institute of Manuscripts, 2001), 37-53.

32 See also *Contra sec.* and *Contra sec. ep. Mani* 15-23; *De vera religione* 39.73.

33 For a refutation of Augustine's perspective: van Vliet, *Adoptianismus*, Kap. IV.A

major bone of contention of Augustine against the Manichaeans was their conception of the soul as a material entity to the wholesale exclusion of an incorporeal and spiritual reality.³⁴ They considered thinking a material activity (*Contra Secundinum Manichaeum liber unus* 20.12) and as such, truth was contemplated only with the physical senses (*De vera religione* 30). Their conception of the soul as divine -as light consubstantial with the Godhead and therefore resembling the Godhead- was also of a material nature (*Conf.* III.6-10). Plotinus' philosophy provided Augustine with a more plausible doctrine of the human soul, especially in which the highest region, the rational soul, was completely incorporeal. Human thought went far beyond the perception of the physical senses (for otherwise one could not contemplate the divine, which was wholly immaterial). The crux of the matter here, Augustine confessed, is that he himself during these years (between the age of 19 and 28) could not imagine reality extending any further than that which was perceptible to the senses (III.7.12). He witnessed the Manichaeans doing the same.

Augustine came to regard the Manichaean conception of *malum* as a substantial and causal principle, as dangerous. Evil conceived as a force exterior to human will, had the direct effect of indifference to an individual's part in immorality. It implanted blindness to the truth of human nature: of the weak will which is inherently proud and egotistic; that evil exists in oneself and not outside oneself as a separate invading force (such as in *Conf.* III.8.16-17). This conception too was corrected by Plotinus' conception of the Good as the highest principle. Augustine's later conception of evil, as influenced by Plotinus' view, became an integral element of his doctrine of the *imago Dei/Trinitatis*.

Augustine accused Manichaeans of arrogance in a number of different ways. He saw that their conception of self-redemption by doing only good works would keep them trapped in self-deceit and illusions which would ultimately deter them from ever becoming divine. In short, their lack of humility was a direct result of an incorrect understanding of God and particularly of Christ (*Conf.* V.3.3 and V.3.4). Christ was indeed designated as one of the redeemers in Manichaeism. Yet the crux of the matter, in Augustine's eyes, was that they ignored one's dependence on Christ's grace for redemption.³⁵ Instead of glorifying Christ, they glorified themselves (*Conf.* IV.1.1) and their own alleged divinity (V.3.5, V.10.18).³⁶ One requires Christ to heal the debility of the human will and its inappropriate desires, a feat which is not possible to accomplish alone. This last point of critique is also relevant to his critique of Platonists. They too displayed arrogance and this was according to Augustine due to their lack of recognition of important lessons of Christ, which they rejected.

In spite of Mani's pretension that his revelation brought forth a 'rational world religion' with an intellectual appeal, Augustine became disillusioned with the many inconsistencies of these teachings. He relayed an important event which became the straw that broke the camel's back: he began to ponder the Manichaean vision of the supra-lunary world involved in combat between light and darkness and its discrepancies with the mathematical calculations by astronomers which explained and even predicted the movements of the stars and the influence of the moon (for example, the flow of tides, eclipses).³⁷ He longed to have a serious discussion with an authority on the subject.

34 G. Quispel, an internationally recognized researcher of Gnosticism and Manichaeism, would contest Augustine's perspective of Manichaeism as being materialistic (e.g.: *Das ewige Ebenbild*).

35 It remains unclear in this exposition what the Manichaean Christ's role was in battling the evil forces, referring to the biblical verses of him 'taking away the sins of the world' or 'dying on the cross for our sins': whether Manichaeans attached literal meaning to these biblical passages and whether this was evident in their cosmology.

36 Their founder as well as their bishops believed themselves to be direct manifestations of the Holy Spirit and were as such already assured of their redemption (i.e.: of the Elected = the Perfect).

37 *Conf.* V.3. 6, 4.7, 5.8-9, 6.10, and 7.12-13; Augustine criticized both astronomers and Manichaeans for their admiration and adoration of the creation instead of its Creator (*Conf.* III.6.10).

His chance came in the summer of 382 when the Manichaeian bishop Faustus of Mileve, a reputed exegete renowned for his eloquence, arrived to Carthage (*Conf.* V.6.10). Faust's inability to explain the discrepancies was a bitter disappointment.

Simultaneously it dawned on him that many Manichaeians, like himself, believed that if an idea was packaged in erudite language then it was considered more credible than concepts expressed in simple language (referring to his original criticism of the bible in *Conf.* V.6.10). Subsequently, he discovered that many more of Mani's revealed tenets, when reflected upon, had little theological credibility.³⁸ The point here which Augustine was apparently underlining in his autobiography, was the onset of his growing need at that time of his life to understand and intellectually accept what he believed. A belief must be grounded in viable truths which will prove their legitimacy; religious experiences must be couched in a philosophically sound foundation.³⁹ He found these conditions fulfilled in Platonist philosophy, such as the use of logical or feasible arguments to convey truths of the divine, as well as the notion of *credo ut intellectum*: the necessity of believing in order to understand (for example: *Enn.* V.5.12.3), in which understanding in the long run will gradually replace mere belief. (See Chapter V.3.iii.g. on Augustine's doctrine of faith.)

In the upcoming sections of this chapter, the points of Augustine's critique of Manichaeism discussed here will be reiterated and discussed anew in the context of Augustine's appraisal of Platonism. There we will examine further how his critique of Manichaeism spurred him on to further study, ultimately to embrace certain notions of Platonist philosophy. These particular points of critique will lead to crucial insights as to what Augustine explicitly favored or objected to in Platonism, which eventually re-appear in his doctrine of the *imago Dei*. Yet before this discussion can take place, and before his account of his first reading of Platonist books can be treated, it is necessary to resume Augustine's autobiography in *Conf.* Following his Manichaeian period, other events took place in his life which are not only important to account for in his intellectual development, but are also consequential for his later formulation of his doctrine of the image of God. These two important influences on Augustine will be treated in utmost brevity here: his encounter with skepticism and then his contact with Bishop Ambrose and Simplicianus at the Catholic basilica in Milan. Both contacts encouraged Augustine to search for more answers in Platonism as well as in the Catholic reading of the bible.

1.i.e. Augustine's Post-Manichaeian Intellectual Development

As Augustine's discontentment with Manichaeian attitudes and notions increased with the years, his adherence to the sect grew thinner and he sought truth elsewhere. He began to question if

38 Hoffman illustrates the tension in Manichaeism between belief in Mani's revelation and the rational. Manichaeism was based on the revelation of Mani yet its history of the world's beginning as well as the explanation of reality was presented in a logical and the most rational comprehensible way. See notes 26-27. Their religion was not a result of discursive reflection and was not developed by conceptual logic. Mani's revelation was seen as a gift from God, which a human was unable to fabricate alone. As such, insight was not required by individual Manichaeians. The human was called back to the Light world (just as the Primal Human in the creation myth: for a more extensive summary of the myth see Zwollo, "Manichese Kosmologie", 43-146: on the Primal Human 143-144). His being was introduced into the *gnosis*, the truth and secrets of the world of Light ("Erst Einsehen", *A&M Latin West*, 77-85).

39 Hoffman (*ibid.*, 105-108) points out that Mani's rational *gnosis* which required belief in order to be understood, differed from what Augustine later posited about believing before acquiring insight (LZ: for instance in *Trin.* XIII.1.1-4. See Chapter V.3.iii.g). The latter relied upon authority, the Scriptures as Word of God, which communicated these truths. Augustine placed conditions upon belief. One must be able to support truth with some kind of verifiable, outer evidence, *i.e.* the proof of the authority of the church was supported by uninterrupted traditions. (See also *De vera religione* 24-54.)

truth could even be found at all. He moved from Carthage to Rome in 383 to take up his career as a professor of Rhetoric (*Conf.* V.12.14). While in Rome (and probably in Milan too, in 384), he began studying skepticism for a short period (V.9; V.10.18-20) with which he was already familiar through Cicero's works. His turn to Academicians represented his first contact with Platonism.⁴⁰ Skeptics were of the opinion that all assertions should be doubted because truth cannot possibly be known through the physical senses. Hence his encounter with philosophy reinforced his doubts in Manichaeism which prescribed deriving truth from sense perception (*Conf.* V.14.25), convincing him even more that the Manichaean view of reality was an epistemological dead end. After a year's stay in Rome, he landed a position as professor of Rhetoric at the emperor's residence in Milan (V.18.22) where he remained for approximately four years (*ca.* 383-387). Upon arriving there, Augustine was still unsettled about the tenets of Manichaean ideology -such as the origin of evil (VII.2.3-5, 2.5-7, 7.11) and how God could be both good and evil (V.10.20) -conceptions for which he found no satisfying alternative. The bishop of Milan played an important role in his further development. A thorough study of Ambrose's influence on Augustine's doctrine falls unfortunately beyond the scope of this study, thus the treatment here will necessarily be brief.

1.i.f The Influence of Ambrose

Bishop Ambrose was an influential religious and political figure in Milan. His famed eloquence aroused Augustine's curiosity and soon he was attending mass on Sunday to listen to Ambrose's biblical exegeses (*Conf.* V.13.23). To his growing amazement, he began to discern the differences between Manichaeism and Catholicism. The first was Ambrose's non-literal interpretation of the Old Testament. Augustine had been accustomed to the Manichaean's severe literal reading of the Old Testament which had led them to conclude (*i.a*) that Catholics held an anthropomorphic -and in their eyes ridiculous- conception of God (VI.3.4).⁴¹ Augustine discovered from Ambrose's sermons that this claim was not justified. Subsequently he learned that the Jewish bible contained stories of value and indeed referred to ultimate truths (V.14.25). Mani rejected the Old Testament in its entirety, claiming that it had been falsified because (when read literally) it contained only fragments of the truth. In his teaching, God the Father from the creation story in Genesis belonged to the nefarious forces who created humans and the material world.⁴² Augustine came to the conclusion that these Manichaean claims were intended to mislead seekers of truth and keep them as far as away as possible from finding it.

Yet Augustine was not entirely convinced that Catholicism was the way for him. He decided to become a catechumen in the Catholic church in Milan at least '*until some clear light should come by which I could direct my course.*' (*Conf.* V.14.25). Augustine also became acquainted with the bishop's former instructor, Simplicianus (VIII.1.1). These two church men, whom Augustine came to admire greatly, aided him in his refutation of Manichaeism by deepening his understanding of Christianity and by inculcating in him a new appreciation of the bible. In Ambrose's sermons he also heard for the first time that mankind had been created according to God's image in a non-physical,

40 These were Platonists of the Athenian Academy, *i.e.* Carneades and the Middle Academy (see Brown, *Augustine*, 79-80; van Oort, *Jerusalem Babylon*, 56). These philosophers were not in doubt that truth existed, as Augustine put it, but did doubt whether truth could be known. In *Contra Academicos* (386) Augustine expressed his criticism of skepticism. Later he came to reject the skeptic standpoint of never being able to arrive at truth and even considered it harmful (*Conf.* VI.1).

41 See note 29 where this subject is also treated. See also *De genesi contra manichaeos* 17.27.

42 Other objections of Mani to the Old Testament was that it contained scandalous stories of the patriarchs and their immoral behavior (*e.g.*: polygamy).

spiritual sense (*Conf.* VI.3.4). He admitted that at that time he could not comprehend how such an image of God could exist (VI.4.5),⁴³ because prior to his stay in Milan his own conception of God had been materialistic. Ambrose's sermons or exegetical works could have been what initially brought Augustine to the path of understanding the immateriality of God and of other conceptions such as the origin of evil or his initial interpretation of Gen. 1:26-27, the *imago Dei*.⁴⁴ However, the notions of immateriality of God, of evil as the absence of good, as well as a doctrine of imaging God are strongly present in Plotinus' *Enneads* as well, as we shall see below.

1.ii. Confessions: Augustine's Appraisal of Platonism

Augustine recalls another important event in his life during his stay in Milan (VII.9.13): 'Through a man puffed up with monstrous pride, you brought under my eye some books of the Platonists⁴⁵ translated from Greek into Latin.'⁴⁶ In books VII-VIII of *Conf.*, he describes the content of the *libri platonicorum* which directly inspired fiery enthusiasm. These books were presumably treatises of the *Enneads* or works of Plotinus' disciple, Porphyry.⁴⁷ The following discussion will deal with

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- 43 'I also learned that your sons, whom you have regenerated through grace through their mother, the Catholic Church, understood the text concerning man being made by you in your image, not to mean that they believed and thought you to be bounded by the form of a human body. Although I had not the least notion or even an obscure suspicion how there could be spiritual substance ... I was glad, if also ashamed, to discover that I had been barking for years not against the Catholic faith but against mental figments of physical images.' *Conf.* VI.4.5. (See Augustine's notion of *phantasma* in Chapter IV. 2.vii. In this context "fantasy image" refers to the mythical conceptions of gods which played a role in the Manichaean cosmic myth.) 'I didn't know that God is spirit and not a being with limbs in length and width..., it is not everywhere whole, as a spirit is the same as God. And also that which is in us by which we have a resemblance...' (VI.3.4).
- 44 See G.A. McCool, "The Ambrosian Origin of St. Augustine's Theology of the Image of God in Man", *Theological Studies*: volume 20 (1959), 62-81. McCool (and other researchers) assume Augustine's dependency on Ambrose for his doctrine of the *imago Dei* (See Ambrose: *Hexameron*). (Cf. *De beata vita* I.4: Augustine's reference to Ambrose and Plotinus.) A general consensus exists concerning influence of Plotinus in the works of Ambrose, evidenced by his quoting of numerous passages from the *Enneads* without ever mentioning Plotinus, Platonism or Greek philosophy (such as in *De Isaac* and *De bono mortis*, two sermons preached in 386. See McCool, *ibid.*, 64). This discovery was made by P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustine*, (Paris: De Boccard, 1950, 1968), 93-138. Prior to this discovery, researchers believed that Ambrose had little interest in philosophy on account of his expressed anti-philosophical attitude.
- 45 Augustine used the term 'Platonist' in *Conf.* but he did not differentiate between Plato, Middle-Platonists or Neo-Platonists (the latter of which are modern designations). In *Civ. Dei* he did differentiate between different Platonists, see 1.ii. and 2.i.
- 46 It is not clear in *Conf.* whether Augustine actually had contact with Platonists of his day. The only mention of a contact was the "puffed up person" who handed him the Latin translations. It appears that Augustine's real involvement with Platonism was through reading their literature.
Was there a circle of Milanese Christian Platonists with whom Augustine would have come into contact? This was a theory proposed originally by P. Courcelle, *Recherches*, 136-138 and 251-255. I concede with J.J. McEvoy, that there is not enough evidence to posit a Platonist movement within the church of Milan. ["Neo-Platonism and Christianity: Influence, Syncretism or Discernment?" in: T. Finan, V. Twoney (eds.), *The Relationship between Neo-Platonism and Christianity*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1992), 155-170, 164, 169]. See also F. van Fleteren, "Ascent to God" *AttA*, 63-67, 64.
- 47 Based upon his remarks in from *Conf.* VII.9.13, VII.20.26 and other works, it is commonly believed that these books were in one form or another the content of Plotinus' *Enneads*. Especially his account of the inward turn, the ascent etc. in *Conf.* point to Plotinus. However according to some researchers, these aspects could possibly have been relayed through the works of Porphyry. For the history of the issue -what were the *libri platonicorum* which Augustine read?-, see note 1 (van Fleteren, Rombs, Kany). Also see M. Fattal, *Plotin chez Augustin suivi de Plotin face aux Gnostiques*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006); See also L. Zwollo, "Plotinus Doctrine of the Logos as a Major Influence on Augustine's Exegesis of Genesis" *Augustiniana* 60 (2010) 3-4, 235-261, 236-237. My article provides a short overview and bibliography of responses to this question. The responses are so numerous that they cannot be listed in their entirety.

Augustine's reports in *Conf.* on how he experienced Platonism at that time of his life. This will include how these Platonist notions liberated him from Manichaean falsities and ultimately brought him closer to Catholicism.⁴⁸

1.ii.a. The Platonist 'Son of God' (who is not Christ)

In the famous passages of *Conf.* VII.9.13-15, Augustine claims that certain notions of truth which he read in the Platonist books were those which he found in the Gospel of John (1:1-5).⁴⁹ He described the similarities which he discovered between the two: that the Word of God was born from God and that it is the source of all things; that the Word is the Light of the World which mankind did not accept and that the Word is the only begotten Son of God the Father who is unchangeable and eternal. He also read in the Platonist books that, just as in John, souls receive the fullness of God and become blessed and wise by participating in his Wisdom.⁵⁰

Augustine's reading of the *libri platoniorum* was accompanied by euphoria. A note of interest to interject here is that Augustine had told Simplicianus about his reading of the Platonist books, who in turn, congratulated him for not falling for the misleading cosmologies of other philosophers. Simplicianus told him that in the works of the Platonists, God and the Word of God were expounded in various ways (*Conf.* VIII.2.3). Yet shortly afterwards, Augustine's enthusiasm for these books cooled. Because in the same books he discovered a number of unacceptable notions and especially that something crucial was missing: an account of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

For Platonists, who posited the immateriality of God, the incarnation of a divinity into human physical body was unthinkable. For this reason, the New Testament notion of Jesus Christ was undeserving of their attention.⁵¹ The Platonist "Son of God" did not incarnate into a physical body or lead a human life, nor would he have died for the sake of humanity or for all their sins. Lacking a Christology (which would include the Incarnation of the Son of God), Augustine deemed the Plotinian Godhead deficient. There was no personal deity to whom one can pray or confess; nor a deity who answers or forgives sins, instilling in humans the awareness of a humble and tender heart, while promising resurrection after death (see quote note 60). Christ is in this sense radically different than Plotinus' wholly immaterial and transcendent second hypostasis Intellect (which was likely what Augustine was referring to in *Conf.* VII.9.13 as the Platonist 'Son of God' (see also section 2.iii.h). Christ is for Augustine a divine entity who interacts with humans on a personal level and grants salvation. However it is important to underline here that although Augustine objected to the absence of Jesus Christ in Plotinus' philosophy, he found the Neo-Platonist immaterial conception of God which is the highest Good, Truth, Light and Wisdom highly acceptable. He additionally found

48 For an overview of Augustine's comments on Platonism in *Conf.* and *Civ. Dei*, the Plotinian influences in *Trin.* as well as current questions debated in Augustinian scholarship, see M. Fattal, *Plotin chez Augustin*, 2006.

49 In Augustine's discussion of Plato and the Platonists in *Civ. Dei* X.2, he mentioned again these correspondences with the Gospel of John and then cited Plotinus' name. He also mentioned that Porphyry's second divine entity was designated as the Son of God (*Civ. Dei* X.23. This is discussed in section 2.ii. and iii. of this chapter).

50 Augustine's descriptions here further raise the question as to which Platonist books Augustine must have read in Milan, see notes 47 and 66. Many researchers assert that he is referring to Plotinus' divine Intellect (*Nous*-designated as Light and Wisdom) as this so-called 'Son of God' (e.g.: Fattal, *Plotin chez Augustin*, 2006, 83-88, etc.). In my view, Augustine saw the Platonist 'Word or Son of God' as a combination of Plotinus' Intellect as well as his divine *Logos*, the latter of which was transcendent as well as immanent. The divine intermediary between humans and the transcendent One in Plotinus' philosophy was namely the *Logos* and not the Intellect (Zwollo, "Plotinus' *Logos*", 252-261).

51 See Porphyry's "Against the Christians" which Augustine refuted in *Civ. Dei*. This is treated in the upcoming section 2.ii. and iii., see note 75. See also Fattal's overview on Porphyry (*Plotin chez Augustin*).

in Plotinus' philosophy a more positive outlook of the material world, a cosmology illustrating a harmonious relationship between the divine and physical realms (which was more in line with the biblical perspective.) This will be delineated further below.

1.ii.b. The Plotinian Immaterial Divine and the Absolute Good

Augustine tells us that his Manichaean perspective of evil was thrown overboard when he became acquainted with the notion of the absence of good *privatio boni* (*Conf.* III.7.12; VII.12.18). He discovered this notion, as well as that of evil as non-being, in *Enn.* (V.9.10.18-20), which was explicated in the following way: Plotinus' Godhead consists of three Hypostases: the first of which is the One or Good; the second and third, the Intellect and Soul. The two lower divinities derive solely from the One, the Good, and like the One, are completely immaterial, transcendent and good. The One is the highest Good and the monistic principle of all existence. It follows that all things in the world are inherently good as well. In effect, evil can only exist at the extreme limit of the spectrum of good, in matter.

Plotinus' conception of the immaterial divine was essential as well to Augustine's theological development. In light of his critique of the Manichaean Godhead, the Ruler of Light and Good as being of a material nature, he found the prescribed redemption of Mani useless because it impelled the faithful to search for God's light in all the wrong places: in the light of the sun, the moon and even in plants. The ambition of returning all light in matter to its origin caused obsessions with material things, such as the consumption of plants in order to release God's light and to return it to its proper realm. Like he himself, when he first joined the church, Manichaeans believed that the physical senses were able to perceive divine and ultimate truth. This view implied that nothing else existed outside of physical reality and that there were no transcendent truths.⁵²

Augustine's acceptance of the Plotinian doctrine of the immaterial divine and the soul represents an important turning point in his intellectual development:⁵³ it facilitated his refutation of not just Manichaean but all doctrines of materialism.⁵⁴ Augustine extended the Neo-Platonist notion of immateriality and metaphysics to his own doctrine of creation, (which is based upon his

52 Manichaeism did not include a theory of Ideas or Forms as causal principles of all living things, as the cosmologies of Plotinus and Augustine did. At the close of his refutation of materialism in *Civ. Dei* VIII.5, Augustine discretely referred to his critique of Manichaeism as those who adhere to a material conception of God as well as to the notion of consubstantiality of the human soul and the divine..

53 Why was the notion of an immaterial Godhead of such importance to Augustine? Wetzel on the Platonist immaterial God in *Conf.* VII: 'But even granting his experience some authority, it isn't immediately clear why his soul's immateriality should now be so much evident to him or what immateriality in the context is supposed to mean.' (J. Wetzel "Will and Interiority in Augustine: Travels in an Unlikely Place" *Augustinian Studies*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2002, 139-160) Wetzel, evidently unable to provide a sufficient explanation for why the immateriality of God is important to Augustine, attempts to relate it to Augustine's doctrine of the human will and its mystery. My study on Augustine's *imago Dei* will however provide a clear justification by Augustine himself why the notion of the immateriality of God and the soul were of immense importance. Perhaps this may be not so evident in his ideas about will, as Wetzel claims, but it is indeed evident in his creation doctrine, his ontology and in his depiction of the relationship between the Creator and creatures. See Chapter IV.2.

54 R. Holte explains Augustine's perception of the history of philosophy in the centuries after Plato which presents itself as an incessant struggle against materialism. The bishop regarded the ontological materialism of the Stoics as a manifestation of the universal blindness of humanity which was a consequence of its exclusive perception of the sensible. According to Augustine, the skeptical views of Arcesilaus and Carneades were to be considered at least of some service by having signaled the fragility of the Stoic criteria of truth founded upon sense knowledge-even if they, too, could not attest to the spiritual intelligible world (*Contra Academicos* III.11.26, 12.27, 17.38-18.40). [*Béatitude et Sagesse, Saint Augustin et le problème de la fin de l'homme dans la philosophie ancienne*, (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1962) 98-99.]

interpretation of Genesis) and most importantly, to his interpretation of Genesis 1:26, his delineation of the human image of God. Augustine embraced as well Plotinus' designations of the divine as completely immutable, eternal, transcendent and good. The divine can never degrade or become damaged (as in the case of the Manichaean Godhead: the Realm of Light by the dark forces). Augustine will fashion his own theology in a similar way-the divine as transcendent, stable and true in contrast to the material creation, which is subjected to change, degeneration, corruption and death. (See Chapters III.2. on Plotinus and IV.2. on Augustine's creation doctrine.) The expounding of a completely immaterial Godhead also holds consequences for the philosophical conception of physicality and matter.

For Plotinus, the material world, as furthest from the realm of the One and the Good and designated as the only dimension where the existence of evil was possible, does not consist of substantial true being. (See Chapter III.3.v. on Plotinus 'Matter, Evil, Sin and Error' and for example, *Enneads* I.8.) The Hypostases, on the other hand, do. Divine entities are related to the material world and humans through a certain participation of being and this participation consists of the human soul consciously imitating a higher principle. Thus the relationship of humans and all things in the world to the Hypostases (their origin and cause) was dominated by a hierarchy and natural harmony. The Plotinian notion of universal harmony was indisputably attractive to Augustine, as evident in his mature doctrine of creation and the *imago Dei* where the relationship between the Creator and his creatures is articulated in a similar way- for example, in terms of participation. (Not surprisingly, these aspects are mentioned in *Civ. Dei* -in the following section- as positive attributes of Platonism.) This harmony was absent in Manichaean cosmology.⁵⁵ Additionally we can add that Augustine followed Plotinus by positing that the material world was ultimately good and beautiful. This stands in stark contrast to Mani's view, that the material world was created by evil forces and was good only insofar physical things contained a divine spark.

Plotinus' conception of reality was based upon eternal, causal Form principles existing in the divine world from which all things in our world were dependent.⁵⁶ Truth derives only from God and God is immaterial, therefore ultimate truth can only be of an immaterial nature as well. Truth cannot be obtained through the physical senses; it is only obtained with the mind's eye. Human knowledge is thus dependent upon the divine intelligible world (the divine Intellect). These are likewise essential principles in Augustine's epistemology in his doctrine of the *imago Dei/Trinitatis*. Augustine borrowed these from Plotinus, as well as the confirmation that the truth did indeed exist and could be obtained (unlike Academic skepticism). Augustine also learned from Plotinus that God exists in the human soul in the form of divine Light. This sounds Manichaean- yet in Plotinus philosophy all of these (the soul,

55 A.H. Armstrong observes that Augustine likely found Manichaean cosmology depressing because of its view that the world and matter were essentially of an evil nature and were not destined to survive. The negative view of the world could have been alleviated, says Armstrong, by Augustine's apprehension of the correct reading of Genesis, the subsequent appreciation of the Old Testament which he learned in Milan (*i.e.*: the affirmation that the creation is good, *e.g.* *Conf.* VII.13.19: his praise of the beauty of God's creation). His positive estimation of the visible world could have been inspired as well as by readings of Plotinus' *Enneads* (*e.g.*: *Enn.* I.6. and III.2.13, 17-33), treatises in which the beauty of the world was praised. ("Gnosis and Greek Philosophy" in: B. Aland (ed.), *Gnosis, Festschrift für Hans Jonas*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978) 87-124, 113). Fattal points out that Porphyry's urging to flee the body in order to ascend to the higher principles (*Civ. Dei* X.24, 29; XXII.26), would neither have been inspiring to Augustine (*Plotin chez Augustin*, 25-26, note 38). In these passages, Augustine defended Christ's Incarnation in a body as a token of his humility. He also attested to the beauty of creation, the human body, gifts of God, signs of His goodness (*Civ. Dei* XXII.24) in a way similar to Plotinus.

56 See note 52 on Manichaeism lacking a conception of the intelligible world. See also *Civ. Dei* VIII.6, in section 2.iii.d. of this chapter: Augustine's account of the Platonist notion of the intelligible world.

God's light) are of an immaterial nature. It is evident in Augustine's major works (such as *Conf.*, *Civ. Dei*, *Gen. litt.*, and *Trin.*) that he studied these concepts directly from treatises from Plotinus' *Enneads*. Thus the Plotinian influence in Augustine's doctrines goes much further than what he would have read in Ambrose's exegetical works.

Augustine rejected Platonism for its absence of Christ as object of divine Love and ultimate Wisdom. Yet ironically, other aspects of Plotinus' Godhead, such as the characteristics of the second Hypostasis, the divine Intellect (the 'Son of God') were of influence on Augustine's development of his Christology as the *Verbum Dei* as well. (See Chapter VI.2.iv.) For Augustine, Manichaeism might have at least engaged a certain Christology, yet their view of Christ did not provide a sufficient explanation of salvation in the personal life of the faithful. Their Christology was devoid of accompanying notions such as humility, grace and the necessity of the healing of one's will. Platonism was missing these notions as well, he claimed, which substantiated his persistent reproach of their arrogance, as we will see in the next subsections. Augustine criticized Plotinian divine entities further that they were not very personal and more of an abstract nature. In addition, they were not worshipped nor did he perceive them as directly instrumental in redemption. The Platonists do not honor their gods or bring them thanks (*Conf.* VII.9.14; VIII.1.2). Like Manichaeism, Platonic philosophy was also objectionably polytheistic (VII.9.15, VIII.1.2).⁵⁷ Augustine had attacked the Manichaean claim of being a rational religion. Plotinus' view of the Godhead on the other hand was substantiated by reasoning and argument which had logical, plausible consequences. We can also infer that Augustine obviously perceived that Plotinian theology stimulated intellectual and spiritual growth, as will be demonstrated in the following section as well as in Chapter III, on the Plotinian ascent.

1.ii.c. The Inward Turn and the Ascent (1)

Another aspect of Plotinian philosophy which made an enormous impact on Augustine was the inward turn to experience God and contemplate eternal light: '*By the Platonic books I was admonished to return into myself...*' (*Conf.* VII.10.16-12.18). In these passages he depicted an experience of perceiving in himself an unchanging light of the Creator which is not perceptible by the senses, a light higher than his own spirit. He perceived the difference between himself and that Light: it was that Light to which he owed his existence, the source of Being, the Son and Word of God (*Conf.* III.6.10, VII.14.21, VII.9.13). During these moments he became conscious of God as an unlimited, unchangeable and immaterial Being, completely unlike himself (XIII.9.10). Further he recalled that his ascent to God's illumination had been a step-by-step process (VII.17.23), starting from the physical senses, rising to the faculty of reason, where those images coming though from physical experience were judged. Further he wrote: '*It (LZ: my thinking) withdrew itself from the contradictory swarms of imaginative fantasies, so as to discover the light by which it was flooded.*' (VII.17.23).⁵⁸ In a flash of trembling contemplation, he understood God's invisibility -that He could not be perceived

57 In this passage Augustine added that they revered statues of idols and anthropomorphic gods. Was he referring here to the philosophers who did revere the Greek pantheon? Or was he referring to Porphyry whose understanding of myths were essentially historical? [R.J. Hoffman, *Porphyry Against Christians, The Literary Remains*, (Oxford: Prometheus, 1994) 161]. This comment would not apply readily to Plotinus or Plato. Plotinus did not revere the traditional Greek pantheon. In the passages where the gods were mentioned, they had an allegorical function. Nor did Plotinus revere stars. Plotinus did call on the gods for help to resolve a philosophical problem (*i.e.*: *Enn.* III.7.11.8, see note 79). Plato criticized the Greek mythology for its anthropomorphism and for its depictions of the gods in displays of ordinary human behavior and unvirtuous acts.

58 See *Enneads* V.5.7.17-end for an example of Plotinus' description of the ascent in terms of light.

with material images (*phantasmata*). His illustration of his personal ascent to God is in many ways identical to those of Plotinus. (Plotinus' depiction will be examined in detail in Chapter III.4 and is also compared to Augustine's in Chapter VI.5.)

As an expression of his critique, Augustine added a certain variation to the Plotinian step-by-step ascent. He relayed that he became immediately aware of the inability to remain in the blessed light. '*But I was not so stable in the enjoyment of my God. I was caught up to you by your beauty and quickly torn away from you by my weight. With a groan I crashed into inferior things.*' (VII.16.22). Through these divine contacts he had indeed learned something about the nature of God, but also something about himself and human nature in general. First of all, that it was almost impossible to keep one's concentration fixed on God for any longer than a mere glimpse. Secondly, he saw himself, in contrast to this perfect Light, as a soul with a weak will filled with darkness and sin (VII.20.26).⁵⁹ Thirdly, he realized that it was through the embrace of Christ and his grace that he was at least able to enjoy God's presence (VII.17.23-24). Only Christ could heal the human will (VII.9.13) which enabled the self to focus on the divine. Furthermore, it was only by imitating Christ's humility (his descent into the world in a physical body) that an ascent to God was possible (in imitating Christ's return to the Father). Augustine remarked here that there was nothing in the Platonist books which told of the love of Christ nor of his grace upon which we are dependent for this glimpse of the divine.⁶⁰ Augustine praised the Platonists for knowing where the blessed Fatherland⁶¹ was, yet admonished them for not knowing how to get there (*Conf.* VII.20.26). Augustine wrote that Platonists considered it beneath their dignity to acquaint themselves with the humble heart of Christ. These were things which were concealed from wise men and men of reason and were only revealed to the smaller folk. Hence, Augustine's main point of reproach of the Platonists was their arrogance by having ignored these important factors. These were his thoughts which he wrote while reflecting upon St. Paul's epistles (VII.21.27). We will return to Augustine's critique of the Plotinian ascent and their alleged lack of consideration for the weakness of the human soul in the upcoming subsections. But first we will continue with Augustine's biography which will enable us to treat other essential factors related to his relationship to Plotinian philosophy.

1.ii.d. Augustine's Conversion and the *Verbum Dei*

When Augustine arrived in Milan, he felt restless and insecure of what he considered ultimate truth, he was unable to refute the tenets of Mani's religion, sensing they were wrong. Two important

59 Augustine devoted much attention to the broken character of the human will in *Conf.* (as well as in other works). In *Conf.*, he described the weaknesses of the human will as being overridden by physical longings, in the context of his conversion and of his later decision to become celibate (*Conf.* VII.14.20; VIII.5.10-12; 8.19-20; 9.21-24). Augustine's enumerations of the deficiencies of the will were directly involved with arrogance and self-aggrandizement which he elaborated further in *Gen. litt* and *Trin.* in the context of his anthropology of the *imago Dei/Trinitatis*. See Chapters IV and V.

60 'Where was the charity which builds on the foundation of humility which is Jesus Christ? When would the Platonist books have taught me that?' (*Conf.* VII. 20.26). 'None of this is in the Platonist books. Those pages do not contain the face of this devotion, tears of confession, your sacrifice, a troubled spirit, a contrite and humble spirit, the salvation of your people, the espoused city, the guarantee of your Holy Spirit, the cup of our redemption...No one there (LZ: in these books) hears him who calls "Come to me, you who labor." They disdain to learn from him, for "He is meek and humble of heart"...It is one thing from a wooded summit to catch a glimpse of the homeland of peace and not to find the way to it, but vainly to attempt the journey along an impractical route surrounded by the ambushes and assaults....' (*Conf.* VII.21.27).

61 'The return to the Fatherland' was a quote from *Enn.* I.6.8.22 which Augustine used frequently in many works. He admitted that this expression were originally words of Plotinus in *Civ. Dei* IX.10.17.

events in his life were precursors to a profound 'conversion'⁶² to the Catholicism of his youth: his new understanding of God and the soul encouraged by Plotinus' philosophy, combined with his gradual embracing of the Catholic faith as preached by Ambrose. His conversion represented the high point of his biography, which set off a revolution in his life (*Conf.* VIII.12.28-30). This event, which will not be dealt with in detail here, was triggered by numerous other factors and events, such as a more profound understanding of St. Paul. He came to the realization that Catholicism had much more to offer him than he had assumed and that he wished to become a part of it again.

His conversion represented for him an awakening to truths (VII.14.20) which essentially entailed a conception of Christ in the human Incarnation of the Son or the Word of God, *Verbum Dei*. Christ was the immortal wisdom he had been in search of since his reading of Cicero's *Hortensius*. His new (or renewed) Catholic understanding provided him with the justification of his criticism of Manichaeism, Skepticism and Platonism. All the pieces of the puzzle now fell together. This new view of Christ led him to the belief in the eternal Word of God, as not only the Creator (as in the *Logos* of John 1:1-5), but as the Re-creator and Re-former of human souls (from St. Paul's epistles). (See Chapter IV.2.ii.) He came to understand that the eternal Word's Incarnation in a physical human body served as an example for how to live and act. In addition, Christ as eternal *Verbum* healed the debilitations of human nature and provided the strength and insight for the return to God. He was also the provider of inner growth and divine knowledge, in short, of the necessary tools to become like Him, an eternal and immortal image of God the Father. Living in the human soul and heart, he gave wisdom and true peace. By Christ's grace, one could transform one's love into divine love: the same love of Christ for the world. Augustine now realized that he possessed the courage to do what he had always been longing to do since he was 19 years of age—to lead a life totally devoted to God.

His conversion took place in 386 when Augustine was approximately 32 years old. Three weeks after this experience, he retired to a countryside estate in Cassiciacum with his mother and friends so that they could devote themselves to the pursuit of wisdom through philosophical study (*Conf.* IX.3.5). It was here where he composed his first treatises which reveal much influence of Greek philosophy, including that of Plotinus. He was baptized a year later by Ambrose (IX.6.14). Then they proceeded to make their way back home to North Africa.

1.ii.e The Ascent (2)

On the way home, they stopped in Rome (387-388), where he underwent a profound experience of God's light shared by his mother Monica which is known as the 'vision in Ostia' (*Conf.* IX.10.23). This depiction was evidently inspired by the Plotinian turning inward and the step-by-step ascent: the silencing of the physical senses and going beyond one's ordinary consciousness by leaving behind the images of material things in the memory. He described this experience as being touched by God's immaterial truth and wisdom. Attaining immaterial truth, he wrote, is as experiencing a moment of eternity. Augustine relayed again a lengthy account of an ascent to God and eternal Light, while defining and analyzing regions of the human mind (*Conf.* X.8.12 and onwards in X).

Augustine's points of critique of the Platonist ascent were enumerated in the last section. It included: one's inability to remain in concentration of the blessed light due to the deficiencies of the

62 During the 20th century, there were many discussions concerning the exact nature of Augustine's conversion: was it an intellectual conversion to philosophy? These were triggered by Prosper Alfarić's assertion in 1898 that Augustine's so-called conversion was actually a conversion to Neo-Platonism. Fattal's discussion of *conversio* includes a history of this debate (*Plotin chez Augustin*, 15-39); See also B. Dobell, *Augustine's Intellectual Conversion, The Journey from Platonism to Christianity*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2009); C. Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology, An Argument for Continuity* (Oxford: University Press, 2006), 3-5.

human will and the necessity of Christ for healing them; the impossibility of ascending to God by one's own efforts, and the necessity of Christ's grace to lift up one's consciousness up to the eternal, immutable light. Thus Augustine obviously found that Plotinus presented an incomplete picture of human psychology seen from the perspective of one's relationship with God. Plotinus' depiction of the inward turn consisted of an 'intellectual'⁶³ contemplation of the immaterial God and the Ideas, subsequently uniting oneself with the divine Intellect, then rising further to the One and experiencing a kind of ecstasy (see Chapter III.4.v for a more complete delineation). In spite of Augustine's critique in *Conf.* which might give the impression of the 'failure'⁶⁴ of the Platonist ascent, the Neo-Platonist inward turn to contemplate God's eternal light and truth remained a prominent doctrinal motif even in Augustine's later works, such as *Trin.*, likewise a central component of his doctrine of the *imago Dei/Trinitatis*.

1.ii.f. Evaluation of Augustine's Critique of the Plotinian Ascent and the Divinity of the Soul

Compared to the Manichaean depiction of the return to Light, the Plotinian ascent represented for Augustine an entirely different method of approaching God,⁶⁵ one which was more acceptable in many ways, yet incomplete in others. Augustine's comments in *Conf.* presented however a problem which will be of recurring interest to this study. It concerns Augustine's rejection of the Manichaean notion of the divinity of the soul. Ironically, Augustine did not mention in his critique of the Platonists their conception of the divinity of the soul. Plotinus indeed claimed that the human soul (especially the intellect) was of divine origin (for example: *Enn.* V.1.10.10-12).⁶⁶ Augustine's own account of the Plotinian ascent to God in *Conf.* suggested further criticism of Plotinian psychology, for example, as if Plotinus did not mention the weakness of the will during the ascent or offer an explanation for the inability to remain focused on God. Augustine's refusal to accept the notion of the divinity of the soul was further reinforced in the experience of the ascent by his accentuation of falling back or being pulled back hastily to one's body. Compared to Augustine's accounts, it would seem that Plotinus' depictions of his experiences of the ascent in the *Enn.* rendered a much too optimistic picture of the *unio mystica*. (This standpoint will be analyzed more acutely throughout Chapter VI.5.vi.d.) Augustine explained in his accounts of the ascent in *Conf.* that the soul's attachment to and love for the body were some of the main causes for being weighed down and hindered during divine contemplation. Ironically, these were also Plotinian notions. Yet Augustine accentuated them much further,

63 See Chapter III.3 for Plotinus' characterization of the intellect and intellectual vision. For a discussion of this term in the context of ancient and modern terminology see Chapter V.3.ii.f: 'Excurses on love and knowledge in modern and ancient terminology'.

64 The term is used by J.P. Kenny (among others), in reference to Augustine's accounts of the ascent in *Conf.* VII-VIII ("Faith and Reason" CCA, 2014, 275-291: 290) and L. Ayres ("Augustine on the triune life of God" in CCA 2014, 60-80, 74) in reference to *Trin.* (i.e.: XV.27.50). However, 'failure' is not the qualifier which Augustine himself employed to describe the ascent. In both these works he referred to an inability to stay focused on God. Yet this inability was overcome by an ongoing development of persistent contact with God (by 'searching and finding', or prayer or training of the mind) in order that the will could function well, and in order to compensate for this inability. The term 'failure' suggests that Augustine declared the ascent as futile, which he certainly did not. This study will show that Augustine's attitude towards the ascent is in many ways just as optimistic as Plotinus' (See Chapter VI.5: the comparison of the accounts of the ascent between Plotinus and Augustine).

65 The Manichaean approach apparently also constituted a certain inwardness, in which one discovered God's Light in the soul. Yet in Augustine's view this inwardness did not transcend matter and therefore was deemed insufficient for truly knowing God.

66 Plotinus' treatise V.1. (*On the Three Primary Hypostases*) is considered by the majority of researchers to be one of the *libri platonicorum* which Augustine had read. Others are, e.g.: *Enn.* I.6 (*On Beauty*), V.3. (*On the Knowing Hypostasis*). See note 47.

expanding them to his doctrine of sin -and his doctrine of original sin. Thus, another justification for the inability to limitlessly contemplate God was due to man's general disability to avoid sin (*Conf.* VII.3.5), as illustrated by Adam's disobedience to God (This is discussed in his anthropology of the image of God in *Gen. litt* in Chapter IV.3.iv.b.). Augustine's understanding of sin was even influenced by Plotinus to some degree in another way: sin occurs when one puts oneself above God and is turned away from God (*aversio Dei*). Dominated by the reality of material images, one 'forgets one's true origins' (*Conf.* XIII.1.1), a typically Plotinian expression.⁶⁷ Augustine emphasized however that this turning away becomes habitual and then justified as a second nature (VII.7.11). The topic of the divinity of the soul and Augustine's critique of such, while not even mentioning the Platonists, will be discussed frequently in this study not only in the upcoming section 2 on *Civ. Dei* but also throughout Chapters III and VI.

1.ii.g. Summary of Augustine's Points of Critique

In Augustine's mind, Plotinus, like the Manichaeans, failed to expound the full implications of the weaknesses in the soul which hindered one's relationship to God. Manichaeans recognized Christ, albeit deficiently. Plotinian cosmology may have been founded on the correct conception of an immaterial, divine 'Son of God' yet it had no notion of a divine Incarnation. As such, both the Manichaeans and Platonists missed the profundity of Christ's message of humility as relayed through his Incarnation. Missing Christ's message bore serious consequences for Augustine. Lack of humility incurred a feeling of superiority towards others which impaired insight into one's soul, one's flaws, shortcomings and the necessity of changing one's life. Other defective doctrinal aspects also fostered this blindness: such as, the belief that it was possible to ascend to God or become God and acquire redemption by one's sheer willpower. In turn, this led to the misleading conviction that the soul was of divine origin and to other falsehoods concerning one's relationship to God. Manichaeism did not provide him with the tools to perceive the darkness in his soul. Even after reading Plotinus, Augustine claimed to still be unable to sufficiently explain his soul's interiority (*Conf.* VII.20.26-21.27-see quote note 60).

1.ii.h. Evaluation of Augustine's Critique in *Conf.*

As evident here, many of Augustine's criticisms of Mani apply equally to Plotinus. Yet for Manichaeans Augustine had no praise; they became his opponents. His relationship to Neo-Platonism however cannot be designated in this way. Embracing certain notions of the Plotinian Godhead assisted Augustine in turning his life in a new direction. These notions always remained true for him. Plotinus' philosophy not only provided him with sound arguments to expose and falsify the Manichaean doctrine of the two opposing forces (*Conf.* VII.14; VIII.10.22), its influence brought about a deeper, less material, as well as a more philosophic quality to his religious experiences which (in spite of his criticism of it) inspired him to articulate the soul's relationship to God. In conjunction with Ambrose's biblical interpretations, *The Enneads* provided Augustine with the stimulus for the progressive search for knowledge and truth, for lifelong intellectual and spiritual self-development. It brought Augustine's search for truth back to the bible, which he had pompously rejected a decade or so earlier for its primitive language and style. Now Plotinus' philosophy enriched his biblical understanding. The combined influence of Ambrose and Plotinus stimulated him to interpret the bible book Genesis and devise his own view of the image of God. In

67 As in Augustine's expression 'return to the Fatherland' which was also Plotinian. See *Enn.* I.6.8.22.

following Ambrose -whose exegesis likely contained many Platonisms-⁶⁸ Augustine came to value the Old Testament as God's Word and Truth. He accepted that some biblical passages may not always be immediately comprehensible and that bible study opened the door to acquiring true divine knowledge. His renewed understanding of Jesus Christ as Redeemer and Incarnation of the eternal *Verbum Dei*, which came to fruition in Milan, was a milestone for his doctrinal development of the *imago Dei*. It became the basis of his doctrine of intellect which entailed contemplating Christ as the Perfect Image, whose earthly life served as model in which to follow and imitate. The Catholic notion of Christ as a physical human being, completely divine and part of the Trinity, combined with Plotinus' epistemology and metaphysics, were for Augustine indispensable for the completion of his doctrine of the *imago Dei/Trinitatis*. As we will see in the upcoming chapters, Plotinus' philosophy stimulated his longing for God, longing for knowledge of God and longing to experience God's limitless goodness and love. The many attractive notions which Augustine discovered in Plotinus' philosophy will show up overtly again and again in the church father's works and become, in fact, typically Augustinian.

In the following section (II.2.iii.), Augustine expresses in *Civ. Dei* even more praise for Plato and Plotinus and to a lesser degree, Porphyry. He describes more elements of interest in Platonist philosophy and in greater detail, which he in fact utilized in his doctrine of creation and of the image of God. Needless to say, his extensive utilization of Plotinus' philosophy complicates the consistency of his critical position which also creates difficulties for determining to what extent Augustine himself was a Platonist.

To close this exposition of Augustine's treatment of Platonism in *Conf.*, there is an additional detail to mention. In *Conf.* VII.9.15, he likened the Platonist books he read to the gold which the Israelites took with them from Egypt, as relayed in the bible book Exodus. Although it may be sheer coincidental, it is nonetheless of interest to note that Plotinus was born in Egypt and had studied in Alexandria. Here Augustine is essentially implying: the truth of God, wherever it is found, can be appropriated by Christians for their own use. In other words, take the Egyptian gold –the acceptable elements of the Platonist books- with you!⁶⁹

2. Augustine on Plato and the Platonists in *Civ. Dei* and *Trin.*

2.i. Introduction

Augustine devoted a great deal space to his appraisal of the Platonists in *Civ. Dei*.⁷⁰ He began the composition of this work almost fifteen years after the completion of *Conf.*⁷¹ The most striking difference

68 If we are to regard McCool's conclusions as correct (see note 44), then we can infer that Ambrose's treatises were one of Augustine's first exposures to Neo-Platonism. Before this, Augustine was already likely acquainted with Platonism through the works of Cicero, for example, Cicero's translation of Plato's *Timaeus* (a lost work). Cf. G. O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind*, (London: Duckworth, 1987) 10, note 26.

69 *Conf.* VII.9.15. See also *De doctrina christiana* where he mentioned Egyptian gold in direct reference to philosophers. Cf. van Fleteren, "Plato, Platonism" *AttA*, 652.

70 In *Civ. Dei* VIII. 1-19; IX.10-23; X.1-2,9-32; XX.25-28); *Saint Augustine, The City of God Books VIII- XVI*, translation by G.G. Walsh and G. Monahan, (Washington DC: Catholic University of America, 1952); BA 33-37; *Civ. Dei* was written between 413/415 and 418/425; *Conf.* 397-401. (Chronology Peter Brown: *Augustine*, 1967, 1971); Books VII-X according to J. O'Donnell, were published in 417. <http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/jod/augustine/civ.html>. April 2013;

71 The period of his life in which he composed *Civ. Dei* (between 413/415 – 418/425) overlapped his writing of *Trin.* (400-427) and as such, overlapped the later period in which he composed the books on the *imago Trinitatis* (416-426-427. See also note 12 in Chapter I).

between his treatment of Platonism in *Civ. Dei* and that of *Conf.* is his identification of individual Platonist philosophers by name. In *Conf.* he referred only to 'Platonists' as if they were one large group of thinkers who all subscribed to the same philosophy. (Although it is clear today that he was likely only referring to Plotinus or Porphyry.⁷²) In *Civ. Dei* he gives extensive descriptions of their notions, sometimes pinpointing the differences between Plato, Plotinus, Porphyry, Proclus, Iamblichus and Apuleius. Nonetheless, it will be necessary to determine which points of his appraisal in *Civ. Dei* actually apply to Plotinus. In *Conf.* he asserted that the Platonists were the philosophers whose understanding of God was most correct (*Conf.* VIII.2.3). In *Civ. Dei* VIII.1 and 10, he sharpens his specification to the degree that they are the philosophers who are closest to Christian thinking. Augustine distinguishes in *Civ. Dei* more precisely than in *Conf.* which Platonist conceptions are acceptable to Christians. These distinctions serve to judge which beliefs are compatible with life in the eschatological Kingdom of God in his doctrine of the two cities. As such, he confronts various aspects of Greek and Roman philosophy, concluding that even Platonist philosophy, in spite of its similarities to Christian ideas, was not in itself sufficient to bring about redemption nor entrance into the eternal heavenly city. Nonetheless, the notions he deems as favorable in Platonist philosophy are most important and interesting to this study. In this exposition, the elements of Platonism which invoked his critique will be examined first, followed by those which he assessed as deserving of praise. Then we will proceed to his comments in *Trin.* IV.

2.ii. Augustine's Critique of Platonism in *Civ. Dei*: Theurgy and Demonology⁷³

The bulk of Augustine's critique in *Civ. Dei* was expressed in the form of an attack on Platonist theurgical practices. Indeed Augustine devoted an enormous amount of space to these themes, his critique being addressed to Apuleius (125-180),⁷⁴ Porphyry (approx. 234-305),⁷⁵ as well as Porphyry's student, Iamblichus (ca. 245-325). Theurgy entailed the use of demons as intermediaries, who by provoking 'spiritual imagery' of the divine, aided the recipient in purifying the soul and intensifying

72 See the questions involved with which *libri platoniorum* had Augustine read, referring to *Conf.* VII.9.13 in notes 47, 50 and 66.

73 *Civ. Dei* VIII.14 and 17; IX.10 and 17; X.9, 11, 24, 29 and 32; and XIX.22-23.

74 Apuleius, the North African prose writer, famous for such works as *The Golden Ass* (or *Metamorphosis*) and *Amor and Psyche*, is generally not considered a Platonist philosopher although he was known to have studied it. At any rate, Augustine included him here in his evaluation of Platonists, apparently because of his adherence to theurgy. He was in fact an initiate of several mystery religions.

75 Porphyry was Plotinus' favorite student (and editor of Plotinus' *Enneads*) who indeed expressed critique of these practices, (*Civ. Dei* X. (X. 9-11 and 21-32 -also in *i.a.* Porphyry's *Letter to Anebon*). Yet he apparently approved of them to a greater extent than Plotinus did. Porphyry's students [such as Iamblichus and Proclus (412-485)] even criticized their mentor for failing to understand the necessity of intermediaries. E. Emilsson on Porphyry's involvement with theurgy: 'It is a characteristic of post-Iamblichean Neoplatonism (330 AD onwards) that religion, religious rites and even magic (theurgy) were taken to be an alternative way to the soul's salvation, beside philosophy. Porphyry did not share this view. He did not reject magic outright, but he seems to have restricted its efficacy to the sphere of nature and not to have regarded it as a means to establish contact with the intelligible realm as philosophy could do. His interpretation and concerns with religious matters, however, opened for the developments undertaken by Iamblichus and the subsequent tradition of pagan Neoplatonism.' E. Emilsson, "Porphyry" in: E.N. Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2011 Edition), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/porphyry/>. April 2013.

the vision of God.⁷⁶ Augustine understood 'spiritual' as the realm of the soul which was connected to the visual material world in which we live (See Chapter IV.4.iii.b.; *Gen. litt* XII.7.16), which was the level of existence where demons manifested (*Civ. Dei* IX.10.17; X.27). This was fallacious, Augustine argued, because ascending to God entailed completely transcending all matter (VIII.17). These intermediaries were thought by the Platonists to be benevolent demons.⁷⁷ In *Conf.* Augustine emphasized that in order to ascend to God, one was dependent upon Christ as intermediary.⁷⁸ Hence he had to admit that these particular Neo-Platonists were at least correct in their insight that an intermediary was necessary to strengthen the changeable and temporal soul so that it may become pure and immortal (*Civ. Dei* IX.17). Yet he strongly advised against calling upon demons for assistance, due to the danger it entailed of the possibility of evoking the response of a nefarious one. Instead one should call upon Christ in whom this uncertainty or danger absolutely did not exist (VIII.17). He admitted that Porphyry expressed his reservations and critique about theurgy (X. 9-11 and 21-32), yet Augustine found his positive remarks on these practices, hypocritical because of the materialistic nature of demons. These practices did not effectuate a true vision of God and therefore, he claimed, did not bring a person to attain immortality or eternity (X.9).

Recall that Augustine criticized Platonists in *Conf.* for their failing to realize the importance of Christ's Incarnation for redemption and the necessity of his grace in order to intensify one's experience of God (such as in VII.9.13-14) (section II.1.ii.a.). These remarks are directly applicable to his critique of Platonist demonology in *Civ. Dei*. Christ's assistance was necessary to cure the flailing human will which could not remain in concentration of God (see section II.1.ii.e.). Thus they would do better to make use of an intermediary who was an excellent resemblance of God. The only

76 Augustine's critique of theurgy paraphrased: he began by positing that there were certain aspects of Platonist philosophy which should be set aside: their theology based on myths (LZ: *i.e.* Greek mythology), their political theology (LZ: possibly Plato's Republic on the ideal state?) and that based upon impure demons under the name of God which mislead and trap hordes of people into erroneous thinking (*Civ. Dei* VIII.5). They claimed that beings with a reasonable soul could be divided into three categories: gods, demons and humans. This passage was followed by a lengthy critique of Apuleius' view on demons, being non-physical but immortal. Augustine's last thoughts in this book were: perhaps good demons did exist, but no one with common sense would believe that worshipping one of these spirits would lead to a happy life after death (VIII.14). Book X contained angry criticism of theurgical practices, aimed at Porphyry. Augustine also attributed to Porphyry the opinion that gods were subject to suffering and changeability as a result of their involvement with demons; a standpoint which he found absurd (X.9).

In Augustine's refutation of Porphyry, he demonstrated extensive knowledge of Porphyry's writings such as *Against the Christians Kata Christianôn* (X.24, 32) (XIX.23?), *The Return of the Soul, De regressu animae* (X.9; X.29 and 32) (It is unclear whether this work is the same as *Philosophy of Oracles*: see F. van Fleteren, "Porphyry", *AttA*, 661-663.), *The Philosophy of the Oracles* (XIX.22-23) and *Letter to Anebon* (X.11). Porphyry's works became extinct in late antiquity. The Council of Ephesus ordered a decree in 431 to burn all of Porphyry's books. Ironically, thanks to Augustine's extensive description of Porphyry's works in *Civ. Dei* (and other early Christian authors), an impression of the content of these works has been preserved. See R.J. Hoffman's introduction in *Porphyry's Against the Christians: The Literary Remains*, edited and translated with an introduction and epilogue by R.J. Hoffman, (Oxford: University Press, 1994); Augustine complimented Porphyry as the most scholarly of all philosophers, in spite of his bitter hostility towards Christians (*Civ. Dei* XIX.22). He described Porphyry's statements on the Hebrew God, God the Father and Christ in *Civ. Dei* XIX.23, mentioning here that Porphyry also expressed praise for certain aspects of the Christian God in his book *The Philosophy of the Oracles*.

77 Armstrong on ancient demonology: '*The use of the name daimones for supernatural beings of inferior rank to the gods goes back to Hesiod (Works and Days, 122-126). But it was Plato and still more Xenocrates and the middle Platonists taking up and developing his ideas, who defined the characteristics of these intermediate beings and worked out a regular daemonology...*' from A.H. Armstrong's note on *Enn.* III.5.6. (*Plotinus with an English translation* by A.H. Armstrong (London: William Heinemann Ltd./Cambridge University Press, 1989) vol. III, 186.

78 For an examination of Augustine's relationship to Porphyry's works, his description of his teachings in *Civ. Dei* and how they relate to his comments in *Conf.*: cf.: E. Te Selle "Porphyry and Augustine", *Augustinian Studies*, vol. 5, 1974, 113-148.

perfect intermediary was Christ, who incarnated in the flesh. Christians should not regard demons as being superior to humans on account of their incorporeal souls (*Civ. Dei* VIII.17). Christ was the only Intermediary who promised eternal life (X.22) and could purify and truly free humans (IX.10.17). Augustine also reproached Platonists in *Conf.* for their arrogance. Only in imitating Christ, who descended to the world in the lowly form of a slave, could one return to God. (See *Conf.* VII.9.13-14 and in the previous section: II.1.ii.a. 'The Platonist Son of God is not Christ'.) On the same line of thought, in *Civ. Dei*, he continued admonishing the theurgists for their lack of humility, reminding them, while debunking their theurgical practices, that in becoming closer to God, one must first realize how unlike a human being is to God.

An essential point to note here is that Augustine's criticism of the Neo-Platonist practice of theurgy and intermediary demons in *Civ. Dei* did not apply to Plotinus. Plotinus recognized the force of magic yet did not make use of it. He consistently adhered to intellectual contemplation in order to acquire insight and to elevate oneself to the highest divine principle. Nor did Plotinus, unlike his successors, advocate the necessity of intermediaries.⁷⁹ He even disapproved of these practices. However, Augustine did not mention this or the fact that Plotinus was wrong in that he failed to realize the need for an intermediary. This could be implied in his already extensive reproach of Porphyry for rejecting Christ as intermediary (*e.g.*: *Civ. Dei* X.24). Yet it was also likely that Augustine knew that Plotinus' cosmology contained an entire system of intermediary forces (*logoi*) which transmitted formative principles from the divine to the material level. (See note 97.) Regardless of this, Augustine's critique of ignoring the Incarnation of Christ and the accompanying notion of humility would still apply to Plotinus. As in *Conf.* (VII.9.15, VIII.1.2), Augustine criticized Platonists in *Civ. Dei* (VIII.12) for their adherence to polytheism; a critique which he also directed to Manichaeism as well as to all Greek philosophers.

2.iii. Augustine's Praise of the Platonists

2.iii.a. Plato in *Civ. Dei* VIII

Plato was for Augustine the philosopher *par excellence*, to whom God revealed truth in the pre-Christian era within the field of philosophy. Because Plato could not have known Christ, it was clear

79 Plotinus discussed magic in *Enn.* IV.4.40-44 in a generally negative light - in the context of sense perception and memory - all of which he deemed illusive. The term he used for magic or enchantment, *goêteia*, is the same Augustine used in *Civ. Dei* X.9 (Augustine mentions the Greek term.) Plotinus contrasted contemplation with practical activity in that practical activities were driven by passion towards the lower world of sense images. On the other hand, *thêoria* was driven by love for the higher which was above affections and passions. In line 43 of this chapter he mentioned that although demons were non-physical, they were still connected to the irrational (= physical) realm through their perception and memory and thereby were susceptible to passion (in contrast to gods who only experienced *apatheia*). This falls in line with Augustine's critique in *Civ. Dei* X.9, not only of Porphyry's acceptance of magic but of his attribution of affections and changeability to the lower gods (the planets).

Plotinus' discussion of demons in his treatise *Enn.* III.4 *On Matter* has little to do with magic or calling up a demon as in theurgy. Plotinus' interpretation of Plato's demonology depicted the association of the human soul with a personalized demon who served as a guide in this life. When the soul was geared to the higher intelligible, it received another demon of better quality for assistance to elevate itself above. Yet for someone who has reached this level, there was, according to Plotinus, no longer a need of a demon in order to become wise. One becomes, as it were, his own demon and god *Enn.* III.4.6. 1-5 (*On our Allotted Guardian Spirit*). (See the story of Plotinus' personal demon who was actually a god, in Porphyry's *Vita Plotini* 10.) Plotinus did call upon the gods for help to resolve a philosophical inquiry (*Enn.* III.7.11.8; IV.9.4.6; V.1.6.9; V.8.9.13). Yet the questions were ultimately resolved by his own deep concentration. Cf: L. Brisson's «Plotin et la Magie» in: L. Brisson *et al* (eds.), *Porphyre, La Vie de Plotin*, vol. 2 (Paris: Vrin, 1992) 465-475; A.H. Armstrong, "Was Plotinus a magician?" in: *Plotinus and Christian Studies*, Reprints 1979, 73-79.

to Augustine that his philosophy could not have contained complete truth. Plato was characterized as the wise man who followed and imitated God, who knew that by loving God and by participation with this God, one became happy. Augustine underlined here that there was no need to search for these qualities in other philosophers, for none of them were as close to Christians as the Platonists (VIII.5). Some of their doctrines could be relatively easily harmonized with Christian teaching (VIII.10). He showed his familiarity with the report (LZ: legend) that Plato had traveled to Egypt where he came into contact with either Greek translations of the Old Testament, or with the help of a translator, received instruction in the Scriptures. Augustine even pointed out the correspondences found between the *Timaeus* of Plato and the creation story in Genesis (VIII.11).⁸⁰ Socrates and all his followers merited praise for being the first to articulate ethical doctrines for the sake of improving and ordering human behavior (VIII.3). Augustine discussed their tripartite philosophy (moral, natural and rational) in a positive light (VIII.4; XI.25). Later he remarked that if philosophers like Porphyry would have simply exchanged their errors for truth, they would have eventually become Christians (XI.27). These statements were in fact an elaboration of Simplicianus' observations in *Conf.* VIII.2.3. Yet they were expressed here more emphatically than his praise for (or alleged polemic against) the Platonists in *Conf.*

2.iii.b. Their Correct Understanding of God

In *Conf.*, Augustine commended Platonists for their immaterial conception of God, showing his acceptance of Platonist metaphysics of the divine as eternal and unchangeable. In *Civ. Dei*, Augustine elaborated on this praise, characterizing Plato or Platonists as the philosophers who saw the highest good in virtue and came closest to understanding God and truth (V.20). They understood that sheer knowledge of the one immutable God who created us was not enough to attain blessedness but that this God should also be worshipped. In their search for God, he wrote, they also saw that God surpassed all things, including the rational soul and all changeable spirits. He was not only the maker of his world, (Augustine interjected that they even used the terminology of 'heaven and earth'), but He also gave humans their reason-oriented and spiritual soul which was capable of partaking of the immutable and non-physical light of God (VIII.1). Their superiority to all other philosophers was also due to notions such as: without God no being would exist, no doctrine would be taught and no actions would be useful (VIII.5).⁸¹ God organized all things, sustained all life and nourished all beings, including the human mind; God was Being, Life and Understanding,⁸² in which there was no changeability; in God there was no difference between understanding and blessedness; as such, Life, Understanding

80 Examples of similarities between *Timaeus* and the Old Testament: that what God created was good (Genesis); God as Being as in 'I am Who I am-I am Being' in Exodus 3:14 (*Civ. Dei.* VIII.11). These correspondences were also brought to attention by Philo in the first century B.C., whose works many early Christian thinkers consulted.

81 Here it appears that Augustine was familiar with the Plotinian cosmology and *Enn.* V.1 *On the Three Primary Hypostases* where this concept was expounded.

82 Augustine shows his awareness here of the triads in the Plotinus' divine Intellect (*Nous*): Being, Life and Thinking. See Chapters III.4.ii.b. and VI.3.iii.b. of this dissertation for Plotinus' use of this triad for the *Nous* (*Enn.* V.3.5.44); the triad also applies to the intelligible world of Forms. Porphyry also dealt with these triads in the *Nous*. See also Chapters V.2. iv. and VI.2.iv. of this dissertation: how Augustine applies this triad to the *Verbum Dei*.

and Blessedness in Him were equal.⁸³ It was not only important to realize that God made all things -Augustine reminded while relaying the Platonist notions- but also that no one made this singular and immutable principle. God made everything which is material or possesses life and life itself was more excellent than matter (VIII.6). He also claimed that there was no difference of opinion between Christians and Platonists regarding the enjoyment of full blessedness which the mind will enjoy after this life. Only the resurrection of the body remained a point of contention (XXII.25). The Platonists also differentiated between the Creator and his creatures or creation.⁸⁴

2.iii.c. The Platonist Notion of the Immaterial Human Mind

In *Conf.* III.6-10, Augustine criticized Manichaeans for their perspective of the human soul as material. In *Civ. Dei*, he explicitly praised Platonism for their conception of the soul as well as the activity of human thinking as immaterial.⁸⁵ The mind could not be physical because it must stand above the material images, judge them and determine whether they were beautiful or ugly or that which was superior to them (LZ: the eternal Ideas). Platonists deemed the human mind as the rational soul (VIII.5) and correctly made the distinction between contemplation and sense perception (VIII.7). They also correctly discerned that God was higher than all souls and that the human mind was therefore of a changeable nature (VIII.6).⁸⁶ The life of the mind needed no physical nourishment, the mind was capable of perceiving and understanding, Augustine added, similar to angels (VIII.6).

2.iii.d. The Platonist Doctrine of the Ideas/Forms (*Civ. Dei* VIII.6)

Here Augustine described the Platonist conception of eternal Ideas which was also a direct extension of his praise for their notion of the immateriality of the divine in *Conf.* For every changeable thing, he wrote, there existed an unchangeable Form. Nothing possessed being unless the Form of it derived from Him who was true Being. The divine Form of something material or physical was always preferable to the material object: Forms were always differentiated from matter, or from those things perceived by the senses, subject to time, space and mutability. The Forms were intelligible and are only understood in contemplation. Augustine relayed the Platonist conviction

83 Augustine remarks here are the center of a roundtable discussion between participants such as Hadot, Henry, Dodds, Theiler, etc. (all prominent Augustinian experts) in «Être, Vie et Pensée» in P. Hadot's *Plotin, Porphyre Études neoplatoniciennes*, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1999). The question addressed here was this: from where does this triad derive? Does this go back further than Plotinus, to Plato, Philo or others? (It was also explicitly used by other Neo-Platonists as well.) N.b.: A Platonic text entitled "Commentary on Plato's Parmenides" deals with the Trinitarian aspects of the three divine principles and their imaging in the human mind. Hadot attributes this text to Porphyry (this conclusion is not widely accepted by scholars) thus asserting that this work was of great influence on Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity (and/or Marius Victorinus).

84 *Civ. Dei* VIII.6 and X.2.

85 Augustine discussed the immateriality of thinking (his own doctrine) in *Conf.* (e.g.: X.10.17). In *Civ. Dei* X.28, Augustine recognized Porphyry's teaching that vice could be purified by the *Patrikos Nous* (the Mind of the Father or the Son of God). Augustine addressed Porphyry, saying -but this is Jesus Christ, whom you do not believe in because of your devaluation of the human body, which Christ had assimilated. In *Civ. Dei* X.29, Augustine recognized Porphyry's teaching of the human intellect which could acquire the same being of the Thought (Son) of the God the Father. This was essentially the same teaching of the intellect/Intellect as Plotinus, see Chapter III.2.ii.b.

86 Here Augustine juxtaposed his criticism of the Platonists with his advice to his readers to cast aside the philosophers (without mentioning any names) who posited that the mind was material. (He was likely referring to Stoics and Epicureans.) He specified that the philosophers who thought that the soul was of the same substance as God, should also be cast aside. It appears that while Augustine was referring to philosophers, he was repeating an often made reproach of the Manichaeans of their conception of God and the soul as being material as well as divine. Here he emphasized again that the human soul can in no way be immutable (*Civ. Dei*. VIII.5). For Augustine and Plotinus absolute immutability was a divine attribute.

that a material object derived its beauty from its eternal Form, which was superior to the beauty of the object itself. The sharp-reasoning and scholarly Platonists, he claimed, effortlessly drew the conclusion that the primary Form itself was not to be found in beings where the variability of the material, physical form took place.⁸⁷ If the Form were changeable, he asserted, then there would be no difference between the judgment of the one who was more talented and another who was less so, between the person who was more scholarly and the less scholarly, the more practiced than the less practiced. If a Form were changeable, a person would not be able to make progress or improve his earlier judgment. The Platonist philosophers perceived correctly, Augustine concluded, that the mind, as well as its glimpse of the Form, had more or less a form,⁸⁸ and if all Form were to disappear then humans and everything else would likewise cease to exist. This justified why a higher kind of Being must necessarily exist in the unchangeable principal Form which was incomparable to anything else. As illustrated in the sections above, the conception of divine immateriality and transcendence was lacking in the Manichaeon perspective, as well as a conception of the immaterial human mind. Manichaeon cosmology did not posit transcendent Forms on which material things were dependent, nor did they believe that the material world participated in these Forms by means of imaging. For this reason as well, Augustine would have considered their religion as failing to stimulate insight or gathering substantial knowledge (Ideas) of God. Plotinus' theory of Ideas did include this aspect which was essential for the ascent to God -which Augustine borrowed from him. The theory of Ideas or Forms was employed in his exegesis of Genesis of the creation story (*De diversis quaestionibus* 83: essay 46: *De Ideis; Gen. litt*) and in *Trin.*

2.iii.e. Plato on Virtue, Wisdom and Love of God

Augustine praised Plato's declaration that the highest good was manifest in a virtuous life and that this good could only occur in the life of someone who knew, loved and imitated God. Plato saw that philosophizing was equivalent to loving God who was immaterial. The philosopher loved wisdom and was only happy once he began to enjoy God. Yet someone who enjoyed what he loved, was not always immediately happy, because unhappiness was also caused by one's inappropriate loves. Augustine relayed that Plato saw God as the only true and highest Good and thus further designated the philosopher as someone who loved the Good and strived for a good life (*Civ. Dei* VIII.8). Plato also believed that all gods were good. Therefore, Augustine wrote, he was correct in rejecting the plays of theater poets who represented gods on stage committing crimes: because all gods were good and decent and connected by the virtues to wise persons (VIII.13). Here we recall Augustine's criticism of the Manichaeon evil divinities in *Conf.*, which he found highly untenable and refuted with Platonist arguments. Further in this context, Augustine recalled the warnings of St. Paul of misleading philosophers and their false wisdom. Repeating the observation of Simplicianus in *Conf.* VIII.2.3, he concluded that Platonists are nonetheless philosophers who could be chosen above all others as their ideas were similar to those of Christians.⁸⁹

87 In Plotinus' system of images, the divine intelligible Form manifested on the material level -not as an *eikôn*- but as *eidola*. Although Plotinus was not absolutely consistent in his use of these terms, he made the differentiation between divine and matter here clear. See M. Fattal, *Plotin chez Augustin suivi de Plotin face aux Gnostiques*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006), 83-88. See also Chapter III.2.i.

88 Augustine apparently meant here that the Ideas existed to some extent in the human mind just as in Plotinus: (*i.e.*: *Enn.* I.1.9 13-15) In *Trin.* *e.g.*: VIII.5.8. and 6.9, this idea was also expressed.

89 Augustine added that their works were well-known and that they were more apt to discuss these things with us Christians (*Civ. Dei* VIII.10). Note that Augustine seems to imply here encounters with living Platonists whose names he never mentions. Note too that what Augustine ascribed here to Plato here about loving God and his wisdom, was almost exactly his own words in *Trin.* XIV.1.1. Here he even mentioned other negative comments by Paul regarding the wisdom of the world (1 Cor. 3:19).

2.iii.f. Plotinus on Divine Light

Augustine complimented Plotinus for being the Platonist who understood Plato more excellently than all other Platonists (*Civ. Dei* IX.10). (In fact all his descriptions of Plato above were equally applicable to Plotinus.⁹⁰) Plotinus was again mentioned by name when Augustine expressed his amazement of the behavior of educated Platonists who judged material things of sense perception to be of less value than the immaterial, then spoke of the blessed life, associating it with physical contacts (IX.19, 17), referring again to the demonology of Apuleius and/or the theurgy of Porphyry. Augustine pondered ‘*Have they forgotten the saying of Plotinus?*’. Then, paraphrasing passages from the *Enneads*, he wrote: ‘*We must take flight to that far, far better fatherland where we shall find both a father and all things else. And by what fleet must we take flight? By becoming God.*’⁹¹ Augustine explained this further, using expressions from Plotinus’ as well as from his own doctrine of the image of God: ‘*Now, if nearness to God is measured by our likeness, then there is no other distance from God than that of dissimilarity; and the dissimilarity of man’s soul to incorporeal, eternal and immutable.*’

Augustine then re-asserted that Christians preferred the Platonists above all other philosophers because of their insight in the human soul: that the soul was immortal, reasonable and gifted with understanding; it found happiness by participating in the light of God by whom the world was made. For this reason, Augustine wrote, Platonists considered it impossible to attain the goal of blessed life without the purity of chaste love,⁹² and that the blessed life was dependent upon that sole highest good, the immutable God (X.1). Where we also did not differ in opinion with these philosophers, he asserted, was their claim that heavenly beings⁹³ received their blessedness and light from no other source than the Christian God (X.2). He then pointed to Plotinus as expounding a certain pure, spiritual light which appeared to them: a light which he declared as divine and distinguished from humans; a light that illuminated the soul so that they themselves radiate with this clarity. These passages recall Augustine’s depiction of his own inward turn and the ascent to God’s light in *Conf.* VII.10-12 after having read the Platonist books. His insights pertaining to that experience were that the light of the Creator was different from his own and that God could not be perceived with the senses. Here in *Civ. Dei*, he identified that Platonist author as Plotinus. Augustine relayed further that for Plotinus the rational soul belonged to the immortal and blessed beings who resided in heaven.

90 Augustine described Plotinus as ‘Plato lived again’ *Plato redivivus* in *Contra Academicos* III.18.41.

91 Augustine’s paraphrasing is a combination of passages from Plotinus’ *Enn.* I.6.6; I.6.8 and I.2.3. He quoted Plotinus again in *Trin.* IV.11: ‘*This is the way we should return to the Fatherland...*’ to juxtapose his critique of Platonist magic and false intermediaries, as above.

92 Plotinus and Porphyry were both celibate (as was bishop Augustine). Porphyry did however marry at the end of his life. Noteworthy that Augustine demonstrates here his knowledge of the Platonic/Plotinian notion of *Eros*.

93 It was Porphyry who dealt with angels yet Augustine claimed this to be a doctrine of Plotinus. Augustine could have been referring to *Enn.* III.4 where Plotinus described souls without physical bodies in the higher world of the divine Intellect. In certain passages in the *Enn.*, Plotinus did mention entities who could have been equivalent to Judeo-Christian angels, although the term *aggelos* was not mentioned. An example is III.4 where Plotinus described souls without physical bodies in the higher world of the Intellect or *Nous*. See also *Enn.* III.5.6 where Plotinus described benevolent *daimones*, who desired only the good and the beautiful and were products of the World Soul, yet were distinguished from gods or God (= the divine Intellect). A note of interest here: S.R.L. Clark translated Plotinus’ term *daimon* in *Enn.* III.4.3.17-21 into English as ‘angel’: “Plotinus: Body and Soul” in: L.P. Gerson, *Cambridge Companion to Plotinus* (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), 282-283. The *daimon* mentioned in the treatise *Enn.* III.5 *On Love* had a relationship to the human intellect, as a sort of guardian spirit (III.4.6.3-4); Augustine mentioned the Platonic World Soul later in *Civ. Dei* X.2 as if he had read *Enn.* III.5 where the World Soul as well as *daimones* were mentioned (although there is no mention of light in the context of *Enn.* III.5). See also *Enn.* V.6.4 and note 79.

They had no nature above them than God himself who made the world and also made the soul.⁹⁴ Noteworthy here is that Augustine will demonstrate the affinity of the highest part of the human soul with the angels in *Gen. litt.* (See Chapter IV.3.ii.b.) Additionally, Augustine relayed the Platonist belief that through participation one could remain in a state of perfection and blessedness (*Civ. Dei* X.2).

2.iii.g. Plotinus on Providence, Beauty and *Visio Dei*

Augustine discussed Plotinus from another positive perspective. His principle Providence, Augustine explained, was conceived from the highest Good (the One) whose beauty was immaterial and ineffable. It extended to earthly things by endowing them with beauty (*e.g.*: the harmonious beauty found in the animal and plant kingdoms) (*Civ. Dei* X.17). Beauty was transmitted by Providence through the unchangeable Forms which existed above the physical senses and possessed this beauty (X.14).⁹⁵ He repeated his compliment to Plotinus as having a more correct insight than other philosophers, because of his understanding of divine Providence which administered to the lowest, earthly things. For Plotinus, he said, seeing God was the same as seeing great beauty. This vision of God merited so much love⁹⁶ that Plotinus did not hesitate to admit that if someone missed this they would be deeply unhappy (X.16).

This mentioning of Plotinus' conception of Providence is of significance for a number of reasons. Firstly, because Plotinus identified Providence with the divine *Logos*, which transmitted Beauty and Form to material things by means of the *logoi*. (See Chapter III.2.ii.f.) Secondly, as we will see in his doctrine of creation, Augustine assimilated Plotinus' doctrine of *Logos* into his own cosmology (See Chapter IV.2.v and VI.2.viii.c).⁹⁷ Thirdly, the aspects in Augustine's account here of Plotinus' philosophy -such as longing for and loving God, experiencing God as beauty as pertaining to attaining happiness- echoed Augustine's own account of the ascent to God by enflamed love in *e.g.*: *Conf.* XIII.8.10. This passage of *Conf.* was not mentioned in the previous section, yet it is indeed useful to point out that these same statements refer as well to Augustine's own depiction of the ascent to God by love and beauty in *Trin.*, which were inspired by the accounts of Plotinus.

2.iii.h. On the Son of God in the Triune Godhead: *Conf.* and *Civ. Dei*

In *Civ. Dei*, he reiterated his comments in *Conf.* VII.9.13-14 that the Platonists believed in the same eternal "Son of God" associated with Light and Wisdom which was comparable to what he had read in the prologue of the Gospel of John. (Although they did not believe in the human Incarnation of God.) In *Conf.*, Augustine did not specify any one Platonist, yet in *Civ. Dei* X.2.3, he pointed to Plotinus

94 *Civ. Dei* X.2; Augustine's remarks about heavenly beings seem to resemble more his own in *Gen. litt* I and III or *Conf.* XIII regarding the angels of the *caelum caeli*. (See Chapter IV.3.ii.b.) His remark here concerning -those who resided in heaven, have no nature above them than God himself, who made the world and also made the soul- could also refer to Plotinus' highest region of the human soul, the intellect. (See Chapter III.3.ii. and 4.iii. for a more adequate explanation). The immortal beings in Plotinus to which Augustine referred here, could also be the gods in the intelligible world (as individual Ideas, see *i.e.*: *Enn.* II.9.7.15-16) or the divine Intellect *Nous* which is pure Intellect. See also Plotinus' discussion of benevolent demons in *Enn.* III.5.6; II.9.7.15-16.

95 See *Enn.* I.6 in Chapter III.4.v.

96 Plotinus expressed this in *Enn.* VI.7.34.9-37 (esp. 37) in the context of the ascent by means of experiencing beauty and love. See Chapter III.4.v.

97 On the influence of Plotinus' concept *Logos* on Augustine in his doctrine of creation see Zwollo, "Plotinus' *Logos*", 2010. Plotinus on divine Providence: *Enn.* III.2 *On Providence (1)* and III.3 *On Providence (2)*. Cf: P. Boot, *Plotinus Over Voorzienigheid Enneade III 2-3* [47-48] Inleiding, Commentaar, Essays, (dissertation), (Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, 1984); These passages in *Civ. Dei* on the Platonist notion of beauty and the vision of God could be a reference to *Enn.* III.2.13, (although there is no mention of the One here to which Augustine referred in *Civ. Dei*. The One is indeed mentioned further up in the same treatise in III.2. in chapter 2.)

as being the philosopher whose teaching contained these correspondences and added that this philosopher likewise recognized the difference between the light of one's own soul and that of God's. Yet in *Civ. Dei* X.23, Augustine recognized that Porphyry's doctrine expounded a "Son of God" as well. In this context, he discussed the doctrines of three divine principles of both Plotinus and Porphyry and their differences. In Porphyry's view, Augustine relayed, the first two principles were God the Father and God the Son, the latter of which was the Intellect or Thought of the Father (*paternum intellectum vel paternum mentem*).⁹⁸ Augustine admitted that he was not sure who the third entity in Porphyry's system was. He recalled that Porphyry did speak of an entity between the Father and Son and these three entities were equal in power. In Plotinus' Godhead, Augustine said, it was Nature-Soul which constituted the lowest of the (divine) thoughts of the Father. (Here Augustine showed his familiarity of Plotinus' treatise of the three principle hypostases, *Enn.* V.1.) Neither of these thinkers, he pointed out, posited a divinity called the Holy Spirit, which derived from God the Father as well as from God the Son, as Christians saw it. These passages concerning the Platonist triune Godhead and especially his recognition of their notions of God the Father and the Son, were certainly not arbitrary or coincidental, as will be evident in the comparison between the Plotinian Godhead and Augustine's doctrine in Chapter VI.2. This exposition of Augustine's remarks in *Civ. Dei* now comes to a close. This last remark about the triune Godhead is an appropriate place to address Augustine's critique of Platonists in his work *Trin.*

2.iv. Critique of the Platonist theory of Ideas in *Trin.* IV

Because *Trin.* is the focal point of Chapter V, introductory remarks on this work will not be necessary here for establishing the context of Augustine's comments on Platonism. His criticism of Platonism is scattered throughout *Trin.*, often in short but caustic formulations. Yet they are mostly concentrated in book IV. Augustine's critique in *Trin.* differs from his appraisal in *Conf.* and *Civ. Dei* in that he did not even use the term 'Platonist' to designate whom he was referring to and only sparingly used the term 'philosopher' for accentuation. For example, while speaking of the arrogance and deceit of the devil, idols and demons in this book,⁹⁹ he mentioned in the same breath puffed-up persons adhering to false philosophy. (He deemed them as 'puffed-up' in *Conf.* VII.9.13 as well.) These were clearly the same arrogant Platonists (Porphyry and others) whom he reprimanded in *Civ. Dei* for practicing theurgy and utilizing demons as intermediaries for the sake of furthering spiritual vision. As in *Civ. Dei*, in *Trin.* IV, he had no praise for these Platonists, only condemnation for the illusions and the trickery involved in these practices. He returned as well to other points of critique which he also dealt with in *Civ. Dei*, which would also apply to Plotinus and do not require repeating here.¹⁰⁰ One especially interesting point of Augustine's critique concerns the Platonist theory of Ideas, which he generously praised in *Civ. Dei* VIII.6.9 (point 2.iii.d.).¹⁰¹ One of his claims here is that even though the

98 In Greek, the *Nous* is the divine, paternal Intellect or Mind. See also note 82.

99 *Trin.* IV.10.-11, 16.21-17.22. Other passages in which Platonists were implied as subject: *Trin.* I.1.1, IV.1.1, XIII.9.12 and 19.24.

100 e.g.: *Trin.* IV.21.3: concerning the negation of the Incarnation of Christ, *Verbum Dei*; and IV.15.20: the arrogant attitude that we can ascend to God by our own strength. ('...but what arrogance do people have, who are ashamed to mount the wood of the cross so that one can see the in the distance the overseas Fatherland?') Translation from Hill: *Saint Augustine, The Trinity, De Trinitate*, Introduction, translation and notes: E. Hill O.P., editor John E. Rotelle (New York: New City Press, 1st printing: 1991, 9th printing 2002).

101 Of interest to note is that book VIII of *Civ. Dei* is dated by O'Donnell to have been published in 417 and book IV of *Trin.* by Hombert (see Chapter I, note 12) between 414-415. One might wonder why Augustine did not mention his critique of the Platonist doctrine of Ideas in *Civ. Dei*. On the other hand, this critique is more appropriate within the context of his discussion of the Holy Scriptures in *Trin.* IV.

Platonists were successful at contemplating the Ideas, their contemplation failed to bring them to respond to important questions concerning the concrete course of events in world history, the actual state of our world and the afterlife (*Trin.* IV.16.21). Augustine implies here that human history and the experience of material life provided important insights into human nature, (considering that Christ led a material physical life) which the Platonists, in his eyes, neglected in various ways. Naturally Augustine had the bible in mind here in which the creation story and an eschatological vision played significant roles.¹⁰² Augustine's criticism of the philosophers in book IV of *Trin.* went much further than just a few explicit remarks, as much more criticism of Platonism in this book can be inferred.¹⁰³ Just to name a few: concerning the importance of faith as precursor to understanding; the Holy Scriptures as having been derived from revelation, which served as well as authoritative source of divine knowledge.

3. Evaluation of Sections 1 and 2

3.i. Continuity and Discontinuity in *Conf.* and *Civ. Dei*

Augustine's criticism of Platonism in *Civ. Dei* differs to some degree from his testimony in *Conf.* In his autobiography, he wrote of their unfortunate lack of conception of Christ's Incarnation, which was the reason they missed the importance of humility exemplified by the divine Son of God in his assimilation of a human life. He wrote there as well of their negligence of the importance of humility which derived from failing to see the great dissemblance between themselves and God. Additionally, Platonists lacked insight in human nature, in the deficiencies of the will and its tendency towards self-aggrandizement and self-gratification. They also missed the realization of the necessity of God's grace, the assistance of Christ, to heal the deficiencies of the soul, the infirmities and brokenness of the heart. This lack of awareness prevented a truer participation with God.

By the time he wrote *Civ. Dei*, Augustine had apparently learned that there were Platonists who indeed recognized the weaknesses of the soul being attached to the body, requiring assistance and even God's grace (X.29) to bring them to contemplation and union with the divine. However, these were the Neo-Platonists who advocated the practice of theurgy to which he strongly opposed. On the other hand, he commended Plotinus for realizing that the blessed life was wholly dependent on God. His point concerning the arrogance of the Platonists which Augustine expressed in *Conf.* seemed to be softened in *Civ. Dei*, as Augustine underscored there that they did in fact recognize the ontological difference between human souls and the divinities which had created them (for example in VIII.6 and X.2), in other words, that God was immutable, the human mind, changeable. However, in *Civ. Dei* X.2 he relayed Plotinus' view that through participation in God, one 'remained in a state of perfection and blessedness' (point 2.iii.f.). One might question, why Augustine refrained from attacking this viewpoint, like he did of the Plotinian ascent in *Conf.* -albeit indirectly- that remaining fixed in one's focus on the divine light and remaining in a state of perfection posed great difficulties for the soul? Furthermore, Augustine recognized in *Civ. Dei* XIV.5 that Platonists did not consider the

102 'So then we should not consult the philosophers about the future succession of ages or the resurrection of the dead, not even those who have understood to the best of their ability the eternity of the creator....'(Translation: Hill.) Plotinus did however embrace Plato's eschatology (or teleology) which involved reincarnation. (See Chapter VI.5.vi.e.) One of the passages where he described the afterlife is *Enn.* III.4.2-3 *On our Allotted Guardian Spirit* the treatise in which Plotinus explicates his view on demons. (See note 79.)

103 Some researchers have suggested that the entire work *Trin.* is designed as a critique of Platonism or at least was composed to convince Platonists to convert to Christianity. (See Chapter V.1.v.)

body to be the cause of evil, as the Manichaeans did (he claimed), that they, like him, believed that sin was to be found in the soul, as he stated in *Conf.* (for example III.8.16-9.17). Augustine reiterated his own doctrine that the true cause of sin was due to arrogance and remarkably, he did not mention the Platonists in this context.¹⁰⁴ Another point of difference with his comments in *Conf.* is that Augustine criticized there that Platonists did not worship God (VII.9.14 and VIII.1.2). Yet in *Civ. Dei* V.20, he commended them for this. He even claimed in X.2 that Christians and Platonists essentially worshipped the same God. Furthermore, he designated Plato as the thinker who saw philosophy as being defined as love of immaterial God (point 2.iii.e). Nonetheless, the point of critique expressed in *Conf.* would remain justified, at least in the sense that Platonists did not likely organize formal communal religious services. Worshipping God, as least as far as Plotinus was concerned, would have taken place in the form of personal prayer, contemplation and the practice of loving God. As such we can conclude that there were minor inconsistencies (or were they changes of opinion?) in his critique in *Civ. Dei* compared to *Conf.*

Yet there was also a great deal of continuity between his remarks on Platonism from *Conf.* and those in *Civ. Dei*. Augustine's compliments of the Platonist view of the human mind and the activity of thinking as immaterial in *Civ. Dei* VIII.5-7, as well as his explanation of Plotinus' teaching of the eternal Forms (VIII.6), could be regarded as a sustained polemic against Manichaeism which he described in *Conf.*, i.e. their material conceptions of God and of the human soul. Accordingly they failed to ascribe to the notion of transcendence of matter and to transcendent causal principles (see note 52). The Platonists understood that the eternal Forms, existing in the Creator, were distinguished from the invisible form principles manifesting in material things. They posited the contemplation of these Forms as an essential step in their ascent to God. It is particularly significant to underline here, that Augustine's embracing of Plotinus' philosophy was clearly instrumental for his driving a wedge between himself -his ongoing spiritual development- and his Manichaean past. His compliments of Platonist teachings in *Civ. Dei* demonstrated in fact why he came to disdain Manichaeism-by viewing it through the lenses of Plotinus.

3.ii. Conclusions of Chapter II: Augustine as Platonist

In spite of the minor inconsistencies in his comments on Platonism in *Conf.* and *Civ. Dei*, we can nonetheless assess that the bulk of Augustine's descriptions of Plotinus' teaching seemed generally fairly accurate. In the worst case, they appeared sometimes to lack necessary nuances, which turn out nonetheless to be in Plotinus' favor (as meriting approval). (For example, see 'On the Problematic Position of the Divinity of the Soul' below.) We may also conclude that all aspects of Platonism which Augustine considered praiseworthy were elements which he himself understood to be true and integrated into his own doctrines. It appeared in *Trin.* IV that Augustine lost all his sympathy for Platonist philosophers -at least up front. Even their doctrine of Ideas required correction and in more ways than what he mentioned in *Trin.* IV.16.21. That is, his borrowings from Plotinus' philosophy in this work are rampant-which would invariably denote inexplicit approbation. The Platonist notions of the immateriality of God and the origin of physical beauty and love in the divine remain important

104 Augustine criticized Manichaeism for somewhat the same reasons as Plotinus admonished the Gnostics in his *Against the Gnostics* because they 'disapprove of this universe, and blame the soul for its association with the body, and censure the director of this universe and **identify its maker with the soul, and attribute to this universal soul the same affections as those which the souls in parts of the universe have.**' (*Enn.* II.9.6.60-end. The translation is Armstrong's.) The latter part of this quote will prove to be controversial, see point 3.iii. In *Enn.* II.9.9.44-83, Plotinus also criticized the Gnostics for their self-exaltation above God, arrogance, egoism, in the context of the ascent to God.

aspects in his doctrine of the Holy Trinity. The rational soul or intellect (as image of God) which is immaterial and includes its judgment facility, are significant facets as well of Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Dei/Trinitatis*. Augustine's objection to the negation of the Incarnation of the Son of God and to the lack of understanding of the importance of humility in the teachings of Christ's human life, naturally still applies to Plotinus.

Considering Augustine's enormous effort to refute and discredit Porphyry and other theurgists, it is remarkable that Plotinus falls in a distinctly favorable light in Augustine's commentary in *Civ. Dei*. Augustine allied Plotinus to the 'greatest of all philosophers', Plato, the philosopher who merited the highest praise. In Augustine's perspective, Plotinus was the one Platonist who had not lost sight of the Fatherland, as his successors seemed to do who were involved in demonology and theurgy. This was partly because Plotinus made no concessions to his point of view that an ascent to God was attained solely through intellectual contemplation and spiritual exercise. Plotinus did not support the practice of invoking demons as intermediaries, who were for him, although non-physical and immortal, nonetheless connected to the physical world and as such, subject to the same changeability and fallibility. Plotinus saw that demons were not gods and therefore did not merit any reverence (see note 79). Augustine's aversion for demonology on the same grounds was more than perspicuous. It is highly likely that Augustine would have preferred this form of 'Platonist orthodoxy'.

In *Civ. Dei* (and to some extent in *Conf.*), Augustine demonstrated how he defined himself as a Platonist, drawing a demarcation line between the favorable and objectionable aspects. However he ultimately judged Platonist philosophy *pur sang* as disqualifying for entrance into the Holy City of God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, primarily due to its ignorance or rejection of Jesus Christ. Yet aside from this, Augustine painted a sympathetic picture of Plotinian philosophy. There remains a question: in *Retractationes* 1.1, his final work written in the last three years before his death, he reproached himself for not having been more critical of the Platonists in his earlier works. Could Augustine have been referring to his (sometimes overly) favorable portrait of Plotinus' philosophy in *Civ. Dei*? (To be discussed further in Chapter VII.4.iii.)

3.iii. On the Problematic Position of the Divinity of the Soul

Another issue arises concerning his commentaries on Platonism, which is of importance to our final analysis in Chapter VI and VII. As discussed briefly in section 2.i.d., Augustine criticized Manichaeism for the consubstantiality of the human soul with the divine (*Conf.* III.6.10). However, Plotinus' standpoint was in fact that the highest part of the human soul, the intellect *nous*, was of divine origin and thereby possessed a strong affiliation to the divine intelligible world of which it was an image (of the divine Intellect.) Sometimes he directly claimed that the human intellect was divine or that it never left the domain of the divine Intellect.¹⁰⁵ Yet Augustine did not mention Plotinus' notion of the divinity of the soul in *Conf.* It seemed however that Augustine did implicitly criticize him for this view in VII.10.16-12.18, for his overly optimistic account on the ascent to God: failing to mention the difficulties the soul experienced and the fact that the will required divine assistance. Augustine's adamant rejection of the notion of the divinity of the soul was reinforced in his distinction between the Creator and the creature which was not only mentioned in *Conf.* VII, but also throughout *Gen. litt* and *Trin.* It was therefore even more remarkable that in Augustine's evaluations of Platonists in

105 e.g.: 'Our soul then is a divine thing and of a nature different [from the things of sense], like the universal nature of soul and the human soul is perfect when it has intellect.' (*Enn.* V.1.10-14). This treatise is *n.b.* considered by many as one of those which Augustine had studied likely before the writing of *Civ. Dei.* and also while composing *Trin.* IX and X.

Civ. Dei., he attributed to Plotinus the recognition of the differentiation between the divine substance of Light and the light in the souls of the material realm: that the human mind was changeable as opposed to the divine mind (VIII.6, X.2).

How can we account for this? Did Augustine possibly miss an important point of critique of Plotinus in *Conf.* and *Civ. Dei*? Or did his remarks there simply require some accentuations? I have not yet been able to locate literature which addresses this question.

Augustine's observations in *Civ. Dei* (VIII.6) that the Platonists recognized the division between the human and the divine were technically speaking not entirely correct. Yet on the other hand, the exposés in the next chapter will reveal that Plotinus' psychology in fact does contain a number of incongruences which demand explanation. In consideration of his entire doctrine of the human soul, it will prove to be of some difficulty to determine what exactly he believed the status of the human soul to be.

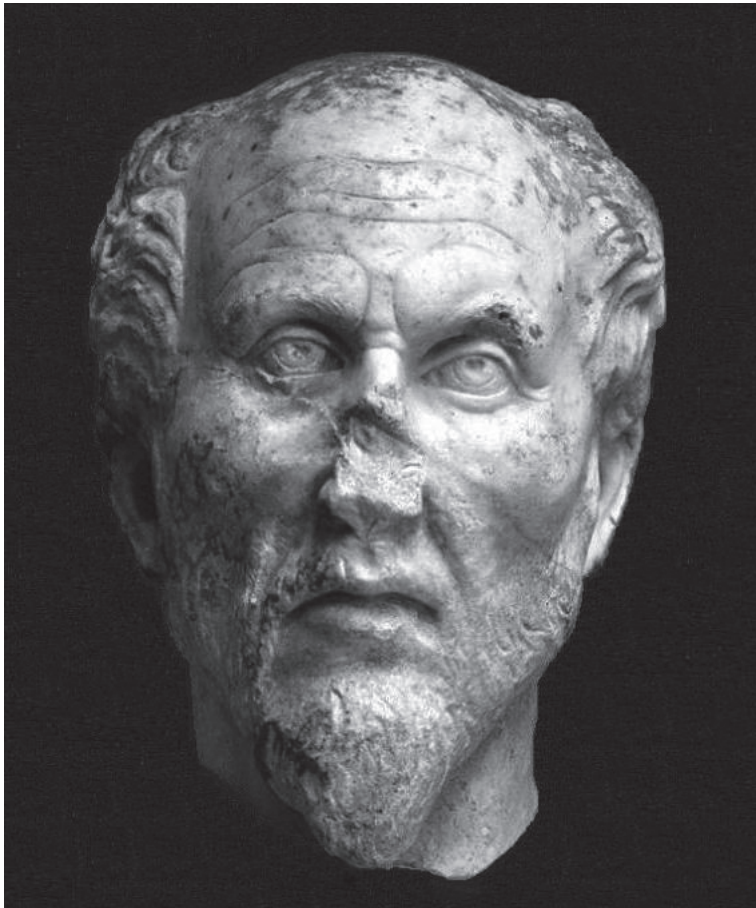
This issue necessarily raises another question: were Augustine's points of critique of Platonists/Plotinian notions in *Conf.*, *Civ. Dei* and *Trin.* always well founded?¹⁰⁶ Were all his descriptions of Platonist or Plotinus' teachings in *Civ. Dei* really completely accurate? The upcoming chapters of this study will provide us with more material by which to judge Augustine's comments. This question will merit special attention in the conclusions in Chapters III.3.iv. and vi.; VI.3.iii.f. and h., 5.v.b.; and VII.2., where Augustine's remarks will be subjected to an evaluation.

106 For instance: was it appropriate to attack Porphyry as a real proponent of theurgy? See note 76. Another example: Augustine's attribution of a doctrine of immortal and blessed heavenly beings to Plotinus in *Civ. Dei* X.2. It was in fact Porphyry (*Civ. Dei* X.26) or later Platonists (Proclus, Damascius) who dealt with 'angels' as divine demons (see note 94). At any rate, these latter comments of Augustine would confirm the 'closeness' which Augustine perceived between Christianity and Platonism. Lastly it is of interest to note that long before Augustine's time, the similarities of certain expressions between the *Timaeus* of Plato and the creation story in Genesis were already noted (see *Civ. Dei* VIII.11) by, for example, the Jewish philosopher Philo (see note 80). Augustine (as Philo) believed that Plato had travelled to Egypt and would have come into contact with the Old Testament in Greek and therefore could have read or been acquainted with the book of Genesis (*Civ. Dei* VIII.11). Of course no historian today would take such a story seriously.

CHAPTER THREE

PLOTINUS: IMAGES, THE SOUL AND THE ASCENT

3



1. Introduction

1.i. General Introduction to Images in Plotinus

Of utmost importance to Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Dei*, is the definition of the term 'image'. His definition not only encompasses his views on the material or physical world—the visual images, but also his doctrine on the human soul and his theology of how the soul in ascending to God increases its resemblance to God. Augustine's doctrine of the image of God deals with his analysis of the human mind and identifies the image of God with the highest part of the soul, the intellect. As the forthcoming chapters will show, the topics of the image and intellect are of stellar importance as well for his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis*, in which he integrates the elements of knowledge and love. A great many elements in this doctrine are indebted to Plotinus' philosophy, such as the process of imaging, the notion of intellect and the ascent to God, which Augustine utilized to underpin his exegesis of Genesis and of the Holy Trinity.

Hence before commencing with an intensive study of Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Dei/Trinitatis*, the philosophy of Plotinus will be treated in detail in which similar themes are highlighted. A thorough examination of Plotinus' philosophy will not only serve to assist in the comprehension of Augustine's complicated and profound doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis*, but also serve as a reference in Chapters IV, V and VI in showing how Augustine utilized the Plotinian concepts of imaging, intellect, knowledge and love in his own thinking. Generally speaking, the only way to do justice to Augustine's doctrine of the image of God is to understand his relationship to Plotinus' philosophy. To do this, we must in turn do justice to Plotinus' philosophy and show the beauty in it which attracted Augustine. This chapter will highlight the Plotinian principles which he regarded as worthy and even regarded as Christian, such as those mentioned in *Conf.* and *Civ. Dei* in Chapter II. These are principles, which he integrated into his Christian doctrines, long after his conversion, his baptism and ordination.

This chapter will also serve to aid in verifying Augustine's statements on Platonism, illustrated in Chapter II. The evaluation in the last section of that chapter (3.iii.) highlighted a problem which is of continuous relevance for this entire study. Why did Augustine in his critique of Platonism fail to mention Plotinus' notion of intellect which was explicitly designated in the *Enneads* as divine? This chapter will confront this problem at its root by a thorough examination of Plotinus' doctrine of the human soul. Plotinus has in fact been criticized by many modern scholars for lacking consistency or for having failed to make clear the relationship between the human intellect, the highest part of the soul and the lower regions of the soul, which are attached to the body. This critique includes Plotinus' lack of clarification of the relationship of the intellect/soul to the divine Intellect/Soul.¹ The present study will attempt to offer a clarification of some of these inconsistent aspects in Plotinus' teachings concerning the status of the soul and intellect. The extensive exposition here on Plotinus' teaching of imaging, which is unique in scholarly literature, will in fact shed more light on this question.

To continue this introduction, a short exposition will be given on *The Enneads* (1.b.). The second section of this chapter will begin with general aspects of Plotinus' philosophy, namely, the theme of images or imaging in Plotinus' cosmology (2.i.). His cosmology begins with a theogony -how the three Hypostases came into existence as images of one another (2.ii.). His conception of the Godhead will also be of interest here as it is the foundation of Plotinus' metaphysics. The focus

1 This problem in Plotinus is recognized by Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 27-32; S.R.L. Clark, "Plotinus: Body and Soul" in L.P. Gerson, *Cambridge Companion to Plotinus (=CCP)* (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), 275-295, 282-288; H.J. Blumenthal, *Plotinus' Psychology, His Doctrines of the Embodied Soul*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhof, 1971), 1-7; *ibid*, "On Soul and Intellect", *CCP* 1999, 82-104; M. Atkins, *Plotinus Enneads V.1*, (translation and commentary)(Dissertation: Oxford University, 1983) 42, 62-64.

then moves to his cosmogony (2.iii.), how the physical world and human beings were made, the latter as soul and body.

Section three is devoted to Plotinus' psychology and his view on how the human soul fits into his scheme of imaging. As shown in section 2, Plotinus' theory of Ideas play a large role in how images in the material world are produced and reflect the intelligible, divine world. The realms of the divine -the Godhead- including the intelligible world of the second Hypostasis, are ontologically differentiated from their images, yet they always remain related. Plotinus often describes the interface here in terms of 'participation' *metachein*. In section 3, we shall see how the highest region of the soul, -designated as the rational soul consisting of the reasoning faculty *logos* and intellect *nous* (3.ii.-iv.), is where this participation between Ideas and images can occur. Gathering knowledge is the key theme here in particular for the intellect -as image of the Universal Intellect. Other features of Plotinus' psychology included in this portrayal are his conception of matter, evil, sin and error (3.v.) and his explicit position of the divinity of the human soul (3.vi.).

The fourth section deals primarily with Plotinus' account of the ascent, involving the human intellect in its elevation by knowledge (4.ii.-iv.) and the experience of love (4.v.) to approach the Godhead, which it images. Section 5 will recapitulate the main points of this chapter. At the end of each section, remarks will be made on the similarities found in various doctrines of Augustine; points of interest which will be utilized for a comparison later in Chapter VI. ('Augustine and Plotinus: the Image of God and the Ascent'). Section 6 is entitled: 'A Short Prelude to Augustine's Reception of Plotinus' Philosophy'.

1.ii. *The Enneads*

Plotinus' only surviving work, the *Enneads*,² is a collection of 54 treatises, divided into six books. Although there are treatises in the *Enn.* with titles which suggest a systematic elaboration on a certain topic, this is usually not the case. Most of the topics in this exposition on Plotinus cosmology, and in particular, the themes of images and imaging,³ are not concentrated in one treatise, but are spread throughout the *Enn.* His statements on imaging are usually short and concise; imaging in itself is more an underlying current throughout his doctrines. Hence, in order to speak of Plotinus' system of images and imaging in his cosmology, we must compile all the brief remarks in different treatises to do so.

Nonetheless, certain treatises are of particular interest to this study. They include first of all many of the treatises which have been suggested as what Augustine might have studied, discussed in the previous chapters. For instance, V.1. *On the Three Primary Hypostases*; I.6. *On Beauty*; V.3 *On the Knowing Hypostases and That Which is Beyond* and V.5. *That the Intelligibles are not Outside the Intellect and on the Good*.⁴ These treatises are lengthy and encompass both the themes of

2 All quotes in English are from: *Plotinus with an English translation*, A. H. Armstrong (London: Harvard University Press, 1989).

3 Literature utilized specifically for Plotinian imaging: A.H. Armstrong, "Platonic Mirrors" in: *Hellenic and Christian Studies* (Hampshire UK: Cower Variorum, 1990) 147-181; P. Aubin, "L'image dans l'oeuvre de Plotin" *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, XLI (1953) 367-370; M. Fattal: *Logos et Image chez Plotin*, (Paris, Montreal: L'Harmattan, 1998); *ibid*, *Image, Mythe, Logos et Raison*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009), 35-62; I. Bochet, "Imago" in: C. Mayer, et al (eds.), *AL*, 509-520; J-F. Pradeau, *L'imitation de principe. Plotin et la participation* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2003) (especially pp. 69-70).

4 The treatises V.1 and I.6, are both accepted by the majority of scholars as one of the Platonist books Augustine definitely must have read. There is likewise a consensus among researchers of Augustine's doctrine of self-knowledge in *Trin.* that the church father was likely dependent upon V.3 and V.5. This was brought to the attention in Chapter I: note 19; Chapter II.1.ii.f: note 66. See also in this chapter, section 4, note 124.

knowledge and love (such as in the ‘thinking Intellect’ and the ‘loving Intellect’). The treatise VI.7 *On the Multiplicity of Forms and the One* will also be instrumental in this study for relaying Plotinus’ account of the ascent by love and his notion of divine love deriving from the One or Good, the first Hypostasis.

A short note on my references: I have omitted the chronological numbering of the treatises from the bibliography here.⁵ The chronological number of each particular treatise is included in ‘Primary Sources’ before the main bibliography at the end of the study under PLOTINUS and ‘Titles of the *Enneads*’. This means that the individual treatises of the *Enneads* are not arranged in chronological order. They were composed in different phases of Plotinus’ philosophical career and generally show three phases of development.⁶ Emilsson writes: ‘*There have been attempts at showing a change of mind or at least significant doctrinal development in his thought.....but attempts at showing a radical change of mind have been largely unsuccessful...*’⁷ A study on the chronological development in the *Enneads* is also complicated by the fact that Plotinus often elucidates a particular subject in different contexts, resulting in assertions which seem, at least *prima facie*, incompatible. Emilsson argues that these differences in assertions cannot be readily connected with the chronology of treatises. For this reason, this study will not lend attention to the development of Plotinus’ doctrines, yet it will indeed take into consideration discrepancies or paradoxes in them which seem to occur.

At the same time, we must take into account that Augustine was born 150 years after Plotinus and his reception of *The Enneads* would have been more or less in the form we have now, as they were organized by his disciple Porphyry and published around 301. Even in antiquity, Plotinus’ *Enneads* were considered challenging literature. We know this because Plotinus’ editor (and student) Porphyry, apparently felt compelled after their publishing to construct a systematic summary of the most important points (for example in *Sententiae*).⁸

5 This is the number which is set in parentheses. *E.g.*: I.6 (1) means that I.6. was the first treatise which Plotinus wrote.

6 P. Hadot, *Plotin ou la simplicité du regard*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1997, 2010), 211-214.

7 E. K. Emilsson, *Plotinus on Intellect*, (Oxford: University Press, 2007), 17-18; Blumenthal, *Psychology*, 4.

8 *Sententiae ad intelligibilia ducentes* or *Aphormai Prostai Noëta: Resources for Approaching the Intelligible World*. For many decades, there has been debate as to whether this work was a kind of introduction or a handbook to *The Enneads* or whether it portrayed Porphyry’s own views which might include possible deviations from his teacher. These discussions are well illustrated in, for example, the first pages of S.K. Strange’s article “Porphyry and Plotinus’ Metaphysics” in: G. Karamanolis and A. Sheppard (eds.), *Studies in Porphyry*, (London: Institute for Classical Studies -BICS Supplement 98), 17-34. See also *e.g.*: A. Smith, “The Non-Commentary Tradition” in: P. Remes and S. Slaveva Griffin (eds.), *Routledge’s Handbook of Neoplatonism* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 115-125, 120 under “Summaries”. J. O’Donnell makes -in my mind- the very plausible suggestion that Augustine’s introduction to Platonist philosophy could have been through first reading summaries of Plotinus’ *Enneads* from other philosophical works, such as the *Sententiae* of Porphyry. These hypotheses cannot be ascertained, for, among others reasons, *Sententiae* is only available to us in fragments [*Augustine Confessions. Volume 2 Commentary Books 1-7*, (Oxford: University Press, 1992), 432.] We could see Augustine’s possible consultation of *Sententiae* as the equivalent to what researchers do today at the commencement of their studies: consulting general literature, encyclopedias or lexicons compiled by other authors who have already digested and organized the material, before approaching their own independent critical study.

2. Images and Imaging in Plotinus' Theogony and Cosmology⁹

2.i. Terminology of Imaging

Plotinus' elaboration of images was unique in the Platonist tradition of imaging. He gave them an existing vocabulary and definition, adapted to his own thought.¹⁰ In a nutshell, there are two main aspects in Plotinus' philosophy of imaging: the nature of a (divine) principle and the image thereof which imitates it, striving for resemblance to the divine principle.¹¹ Therefore Plotinus' process of imaging is intimately allied with his theogony, with the procession of the two divine hypostases from the primary principle the One. Often labelled as 'emanation',¹² the successive *próodos* from the One brings about the emergence of the visible world.¹³ The world perceived by the physical senses derives from the archetypal principles, the Ideas or *kosmos noêtos* which exist in the second Hypostasis, the Intellect. The imaging process however begins in the first stages of the theogony and is closely allied with the functions of the divine *Logos* which is translated here as 'a creative expression or utterance'. An image imitates its model and in this sense has a share in it or participates in it. As such everything in the cosmos is always connected to the Godhead. A *Logos*, as we shall see, is what essentially brings the imaging process into operation. Plotinus' conception of the *Logos* will be elaborated here as well as how it is intimately associated to Plotinus' doctrine of the Ideas as the active force (*energeia*) and formation principle (see point f.).

Before commencing with Plotinus' cosmology, let us briefly view the terminology of images in the process of making the world: the divine Ideas or Forms (sing. *eidos*,¹⁴ *morphê*, *archetupon*) are the causal principles of images manifesting in the world; the images: (*eikôn*,¹⁵ *eidôlon*,¹⁶ *indalma*). As

- 9 On Plotinian cosmology: A.H. Armstrong, *The Architecture of the Intelligible Universe in the Philosophy of Plotinus*, (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1940, 1967); M. Fattal, "Beauté et métaphysique chez Plotin: le rôle du *logos* venu des dieux", in: Fattal, *Logos et Langage*, 301-313; R. Ferwerda, *Plotinus Enneaden, Porphyrius Over Het Leven van Plotinus*, vertaald uit het Grieks en ingeleid door R. Ferwerda, (Budel, Netherlands: Uitgeverij Damon, 2005) [This is the Dutch translation with an introductory chapter which is extensive and extremely helpful (13-101). It includes as well a glossary (911-928).]; J. Halfwassen, *Plotin und der Neoplatonismus*, (München: C.H. Beck, 2004); J.M. Rist, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1967).
- 10 R. Ferwerda provides an inventory of Plotinus' use of the term 'image' in association with 'mirror' with the meaning and references, *La signification des images et des métaphores dans la pensée de Plotin* (Groningen: Wolters, 1965) 9-16.
- 11 Cf.: Bochet, "Imago", 508-509 treats Plotinus' usage of the term 'images': the concept of the image interiorized and spiritualized in: *Enn.* V.3.8; V.5.5; V.2.1; I.6, 7-9; VI.9.11.
- 12 The terms Plotinus used for the translation of 'creation' usually has to do with the verb 'making': *poieô* (e.g.: III.2.13). The term 'emanation' is often applied to Plotinus' depiction of the process in which the world was made, however he himself uses this term infrequently. In this treatise, Armstrong does not translate the verb *gennaô* as 'create', but rather 'generate' or 'beget' in order to better depict i.e. how the *Nous* brings forth the Soul (VI.7.30-40). On Plotinus' theory of emanation in all its facets and the metaphors deployed, see A.H. Armstrong, "II. Emanation in Plotinus" in: *Plotinian and Christian Studies*, (London: Variorum Reprints, 1979), 61-66.
- 13 *Enn.* II.3.18: 'This visible universe, then, is properly called an image always in process of being made.' *Eikotôs oun legetai outos ho kosmos eikôn aei eikonizomenos*.
- 14 J. H. Sleeman, Gilbert Pollet, *Lexikon Plotinianum*, (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1980) explains the Greek terms with references in *Enn.*: to *eidos*, 290-297: 1b. Contrasted or associated with *hûle* 294-296; 1c. of intelligible Forms 296-297; 1d. kind, sort species. See also the Greek term 'idea', related to verbs such as *idesthenai* 'seeing').
- 15 *Lexikon Plotinianum*: *eikôn* (301-302): a. portrait; b. likeness, image; c. comparison, image; *eikonizein* (301) to make an image, pass.: *eikotôs* (II.3.18.17); *eidôlon* (300): image in mirror (300); b. image-general likeness, phantom; c. Epicurean film; d. phantom ghost. (The latter sense corresponds to *phantasia* which is the visual material image or its reproduction in the mind.); See also R. Ferwerda, "La signification des images et des métaphores dans la pensée de Plotin", (Groningen: Wolters, 1965) (dissertation); An added note of interest: *eikôn* is also the term used in the Septuaginta for Gen. 1.26-27: "Let us make man to our image and likeness". See note 35 on *eidos*. Synonym for image is also *ichnos* see note 24.
- 16 Note the similarity to the word 'idols'. *Eidôlon* is in fact the term used for idols in the New Testament. (LZ: This would surely make sense in Plotinus' thinking as a reference to material things or entities which are not divine and are in some way venerated at the cost of their causal principles or the hypostases.

such the process of creation or the emanation can be seen as the coming of existence of the world of images perceived by the physical senses, which reflect in some way their source in the Godhead. Plotinus' vision of the ascent runs in the opposite direction of emanation: the perception of the images related to their corresponding source, generally speaking, from the *eidôla* to *eidê*. Plotinus uses the specific terms for imaging interchangeably.¹⁷

2.ii. Plotinus' Theogony

2.ii.a. The One

The initial phase of the formation of the universe entails how the Godhead and makers of the world came into being.¹⁸ The ultimate origin of the world and all life in it is a Hypostasis which Plotinus calls the One (*to hen*) or the Good (*to agathon*).¹⁹ Recall from Chapter II.1.i.d. that this was the monistic principle which Augustine preferred to the Manichaeon Godhead, the latter of which was divided into good and evil. This principle of absolute unity (or all-unifying principle) is so far removed from anything thinkable or recognizable that any description of it is impossible. Apart from its designation as 'the Good', the One can have no predicates (V.3.13, 14 and 16). Paradoxically it is everything and everywhere yet resembles nothing (VI.7.32.10-15).²⁰ It is a complete whole and totally transcendent. The divine realm in Plotinus' philosophy, which includes three Hypostases, is characterized by its transcendence, its existence in eternity and unlimited life where nothing is material or changeable.²¹ During the procession which ultimately brings forth all things, the One itself remains completely motionless. The procession is however accompanied by the activity or the energy of the *Logos* as a sort of utterance or creative expression of the One or the Good. With the energy of the *Logos*, the One brings a new Hypostasis into existence, the *Nous* or the divine Intellect, Mind.²²

17 See Aubin ("L'image") who claims that these Greek terms which we generally translate as 'image' are not usually referring to one exclusive form or image. In V.3, Plotinus often uses the term *eikôn* in the context of the Soul as image and the term *eidôlon* when referring to the image of *logoi spermatikoi* in the physical body. Yet when Plotinus refers to an image as soul moving in an upward direction, then the term *eidos* is also often used. In IV.4.13.3, Plotinus refers to nature soul also as *indalma* (image) of the World Soul. See Fattal, *Image, Mythe, Logos et Raison*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009), 35 note 29 and 38 note 32.

18 i.e. the treatise V.I *On the Three Primary Hypostases*

19 i.e. VI.9 *On the Good, or the One*; VI.9.3.

20 A. Pigler discusses the enigmatic character of these assertions: how can something which is everything and nothing at the same time be the source of all life? *Plotin une métaphysique de l'amour, L'amour comme structure de monde intelligible* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2002) 27-74.

21 Cf. A.H. Armstrong, "V. Plotinus's Doctrine of the Infinite" (1953) in: A.H. Armstrong (ed.) *Plotinian and Christian Studies* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1979), 48-58. Armstrong regards the One as a personal God. Armstrong: 'Plotinus is the first Greek philosopher to try and work out with any sort of precision the senses in which infinity can be predicated of the Godhead and to distinguish them from the evil infinity of formlessness and indefinite multiplicity...Plotinus is therefore the first philosopher, at any rate, in the West, to attempt any serious treatment of the question of divine infinity...' (p.57). Armstrong discusses Plotinus' influence hereby on Christian thought (p. 48).

22 In particular V.9. *On Intellect, the Forms, and Being*; Also III.2.2.15.20-25; or V.I.7.44-46. Literature on the Intellect and the *Logos*: E. Früchtel, *Weltentwurf und Logos. Zur Metaphysik Plotins* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1970); Many researchers have traced the similarities between Plotinus' Intellect and Augustine's Word of God. (See Chapter VI.2.iv.) i.e.: O. Perler, *Der Nus bei Plotin und das Verbum bei Augustinus als vorbildliche Ursache der Welt*, (Paderborn: Bonifazius-Druckerei, 1930).

2.ii.b. The Absolute Intellect: *Nous* ²³

The result of this new entity is a duplicity and a multiplicity which paradoxically encompasses a certain unity. The One always remains exactly as it is, yet the new Hypostasis is less perfect than the One, due to the fact that absolute perfect unity and simplicity no longer manifest in the *Nous*. In this sense, the *Nous* is an image, but not a perfect copy, of the One. ²⁴ The actualization of the Hypostasis Intellect (or Divine Mind or Spirit) now takes place in roughly two phases: of the desiring and thinking Intellect. ²⁵

Plotinus' depiction of how the *Nous* came into existence is of seminal importance, not only to his understanding of the human intellect, but also because of Augustine's familiarity with it, having borrowed many aspects of it. The Intellect came into being as a *Logos* from the One or the Good, ²⁶ and as undeveloped. Initially, it longed to understand its source. This longing was a result of the attraction of the Beauty *kalon*, Charm *charis* and Love *Erôs* which are radiated by the One. The Intellect then turned (*epistrophê*) ²⁷ to contemplate the One-the Good. The result of this contemplation was the reception of the fullness and abundance of the One in which the *Nous* became pure Thought. This was accomplished by the *Nous* receiving Life from the One and thinking 'I am'. As such, the notions of Being and Thought were fused in the notion of Intellect. Therefore having received these traits from the One, the *Nous* became Being. In this sense, the One was essentially the source of all Being yet it was not Being itself, as Plotinus insisted, because the One could have no predicates. ²⁸

Thought as an expression of the Intellect became multiple thoughts which comprised the intelligible world, *kosmos noêtos*, as Forms or Ideas (sing. *eidos*, pl. *eidê*). ²⁹ The Ideas were the models for all life in the material world which contained as well the principles of Life and Being. Thus there existed a triad in the Intellect, which consisted of Thinking, Being and Life in perfect unity. ³⁰ The *Nous* as universal Intellect, could be characterized as pure, perfect Thought which was immediate, intuitive, eternal and contemplative (non-discursive). These characteristics are key elements as well in

23 See also E.K. Emilsson, *Plotinus on Intellect*, (Oxford: University Press, 2007), 131-133; Pigler, *Plotin l'amour*, 75-119; A.H. Armstrong, "Chapter 15. The One and the Intellect" in: A.H. Armstrong (ed.), *Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), 236-249.

24 The term image (*eikôn*) is used here in V.I.7; but in VI.7, the term trace (*ichnos*) is also frequently used. V.I. 7.1-5: 'But we must say that Intellect is an image of that Good...what has come into being must be in a way that Good, and retain much of it and be a likeness of it.' *Eikona de ekeinou legomen einai ton noun...kai einai homoiotêta pros auto...* See further on the Intellect as image: V.I.7.1.

25 The desiring Intellect: e.g.: *Enn.* III.8.11.20-end; the thinking and desiring Intellect: e.g.: V.3.7; VI.7.35.20-28.

26 Pigler argues against Rist (*Road to Reality*, 84-102) (among others) that Plotinus intended to mean that the *Nous* is in fact a veritable henological *Logos*, coming forth from the One. "De la possibilité ou l'impossibilité d'un *logos* hénologique", in: Fattal, *Logos et Langage*, 189-209.

27 The Greek term *epistrophê* is the equivalent of the Latin: *conversio*. The way Plotinus uses it here is the same way Augustine uses it as in *conversio* in *Gen. litt* III. Yet there are conceptual differences. See M. Fattal, *Plotin chez Augustin Suivi de Plotin face aux Gnostiques*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006) 19-42.

28 Plotinus claims that in the One there is no substance, it is beyond Being. Substance exists only in the Intellect and below. Plotinus wrote many treatises on substance such as VI.7, 8 and 9. Yet ironically there remain many questions, for example, as to whether Plotinus posits a difference in quantity or quality in the substance of the Soul and the Intellect? K. Corrigan does not provide an answer to this ["Essence and existence in the *Enneads*" in *CCP* (1999), 105-129, 105]. (This question can be applied as well to the Hypostasis Soul and the human souls.) In *Enn.* VI.9.1.27-28, Plotinus mentions in a single passage that 'different degrees of unity give rise to different degrees of being.' Therefore, seeing how the Soul encompasses less of a unity than the Intellect, as we will see in the next subsection on Soul, she would indeed have in quality or quantity a lesser degree of Being or substance.

29 e.g.: VI.7.2.14-end.

30 V.I.4.25-30, V.3.5.29-37, V.9.10.10.13.

Plotinus' doctrine of the human intellect and self-knowledge, and are also important in his depiction of the ascent.

The Intellect, just as the One, is totally transcendent and always remains exclusively in its own divine realm.³¹ It reproduces itself further by expressing itself (*Logos*), dividing itself into individual intellects (also referred to as *Logoi*).³² Plotinus calls the Intellect a God: the Demiurge (*Enn.* V.I.8.5). By means of a creative expression *Logos*, the *Nous* produces as well a new Hypostasis: the Soul.

2.ii.c. The Divine All-Soul *Psychê*³³

The Soul exists at a further distance away from the One than the *Nous* which means that it is less perfect and more differentiated than its source. Just as the *Nous* above, the Soul turns to its origin, contemplates the *Nous*, and in doing so receives its properties: Life, Thought and Being.³⁴ It also receives the individual intellects (designated as individual *logoi*) and the Forms or models of Being for the material world which it will realize at a later stage. The Soul is now an image (*eikôn*³⁵) of the Intellect. '*Soul...is...an image of Intellect; just as a thought in its utterance (Logos) is an image of the thought in soul, so soul itself is the expressed thought (Logos) of Intellect, and its whole activity, and the life which it sends out to establish another reality...*'³⁶ The noetic properties which the Soul receives from the Intellect will remain only in the highest region of the Soul, which is likewise designated as *Nous*. Yet the Soul –and even her highest region– is an inferior image of that which it images (*Enn.* V.I.7.40-50). It occupies the lowest (third) level of the hierarchic, hypostatic realm, under the *Nous*. Like the *Nous*, it too possesses a certain degree of unity which is why Plotinus designates it as the 'All-Soul.' Divided into three different regions, the lowest is involved with the creation of matter and the sense world. As a Formative Principle it brings matter and form together with its partner and co-maker in this process, the divine *Logos*, as will now be elucidated.

Now, by its own expression *Logos*, the Soul produces two lower regions which will always belong to the domain of the total Soul. The region just below the Soul-*Nous* is called the World Soul³⁷ which is responsible for creating the universe. [Plotinus also sometimes speaks of an intelligible World Body, which emanates from Soul (IV.3.8.47-48)]. The World Soul then divides itself into individual parts or souls (IV.3.2.55-60, etc.). This came about by its turning to contemplate its source (the Ideas in the *Nous*-Soul) and then expressing itself (*Logos*) (IV.3.5). While doing so, the Soul and her activities merge with the activities of the universal *Logos* or Reason. (Because it unites with the *Logos*, the World Soul is also referred to as the Universal *Logos*.) The third realm of the Soul is called Nature

31 V.3.7.13-25, V.4.2.21-37; Emilsson, *Intellect*, 24-29.

32 e.g.: III.2.2.25. IV.3.5.10. These individual intellects are human intellects.

33 e.g.: the entire book IV and its nine treatises are devoted to the subject of the soul.

34 Throughout III.8: *On Nature, Contemplation and the One*.

35 Another term is applied to the Soul-*Nous*: *eidos*. Plotinus refers to the intelligence (*Nous*) of the Soul as *emphrôn* indicating 'virtue or life in the form of the Good' (*en agathou eidei*). '*...and surely virtue and intelligence and life and soul, thinking soul at least, are in the form of the Good.*' VI.7.20.10. Subsequently the term *eidos* (Form, Idea) for the Soul-*Nous* is used here as well, especially when the Soul, in unifying herself with the Intellect, becomes the Intellect. The term *eidos* in the context of the Soul-*Nous* connotes contemplation. Also, Soul is designated as the 'trace' of the Intellect, e.g.: VI.7.20.13.

36 V.I.3.6-10: '*hê psuchê...eikôn tis esti nou oion logos ho en prophorai logou tou en psuchêi, outô toi kai autê logos nou kai hê pasa energeia kai hên proietai Zôên eis allou hypostasin.*' See further on the Soul as image: *Enn.* III.2.1, 24-25; IV.2.2.52 and V.1.8.26.

37 II.8; II.3.16-18. On Augustine's transformation of Plotinus' notion of World Soul, see A.I. Bouton-Touboul, *L'ordre caché. La notion d'ordre chez saint Augustin* (Paris: Collection Études Augustiniennes; «Série Antiquité» no. 174, 2004).

Physis,³⁸ which creates matter and the corporeal world by reproducing itself further as well, thereby intensifying the already existent state of multiplicity. The World Soul is thus Nature's source of production power.

Hence Plotinus' theogony in short. In the following section we will remain on the subject of theogony because it provides the intelligible basis of the visible world and reflects as well something of the composition of the human being. Like the theogony, the cosmogony entails a downward movement involving the divine *Logos* which is associated with the process of imaging.

2.ii.d. Plotinus' Ontology: the Relationship between Two Worlds

Before proceeding to Plotinus' view of the formation of the material universe, a few preliminary remarks are necessary. Plotinus differentiated the realm of the divine hypostases from the visible world according to its being: the divine is eternal, immutable and infinite; the material world is temporal, changeable and ephemeral. The realm of the One, the Intellect and the Soul are completely transcendent and immaterial. It is only the Soul -its lower part, Nature-, and the *Logos* which have contact with matter or physical beings, as will be explained shortly.

Divine Being is true Being; matter cannot contain true being, thus is at the lowest spectrum of existence. We must now return to Plotinus' conception of the Godhead in order to highlight the imaging process in which the ontological differentiation is most evident. This will entail an exposé on Plotinus' theory of Ideas or Forms which describes how the Forms existing in the Intellect *Nous*, are transmitted to the lower levels of Soul by mediation of the *Logos* in order to form the visible cosmos.

2.ii.e. Imaging: The Intelligible World: Forms and Ideas³⁹

In the summary of Plotinus' theogony, the Forms or Ideas were only mentioned briefly yet they require now a more extensive treatment, as they serve as a major focal point of this study. Plotinus' theory of Ideas is actually a revision of Plato's conception⁴⁰ yet there are a number of significant differences in Plotinus' interpretation which are not necessary to go into here. We can begin by relaying Plotinus' conception that the Ideas or Forms (the intelligible world) which exist in the divine Intellect are considered real, living entities with powerful creative potential. They are the archetypes of all existing things. This means that for all existing things, there exists a causal, intelligible counterpart (VI.7.2.14-25).

There are also Ideas-Forms which convey concepts not possessing a material counterpart (for example: Virtues or the notion of Justice). The Ideas also play a significant role in Plotinus' view on the formation of the universe as well in his epistemology. They have a powerful function in the human mind in its potential to develop itself: by contemplating them, the mind comprehends the relationship of the image to its paradigm, as illustrated in *Enn.* VI.7.2.14-25, as 'its reason why'. The mind also grasps abstract transcendent principles, discovers true reality and in doing so, assimilates the Being of the *Nous* (V.9: *On Intellect, The Forms and Being*). This assimilation makes up a part of

38 II.8; II.3.16-18. Despite the impression its name makes, Soul-Nature, as the lowest component of the All-Soul, is transcendent and divine.

39 Plotinus' elaboration of the doctrine of the Forms, the Ideas, the intelligible world are scattered throughout the *Enneads*. These treatises in particular concentrate on this theme: III.8: *On Nature, Contemplation and the One*; V.8: *On Intelligible Beauty*; V.9: (esp. V.9.8-9) *On Intellect, the Forms, and Being*; VI.6: *On Numbers*; and VI.7: *How the Multiplicity of Forms Came Into Being: and on the Good*, especially: VI.7.2.14-end.

40 Plato's theory of Ideas: *Meno* 71-81, 85-86; *Cratylus* 389-390, 439-440; *Symposium* 210-211; *Phaedo* 73-80, 109-111; *Republic* III.402-403, V. 472-483, VI-VII.500-517, IX-X.589-599; *Phaedrus* 248-250, 265-266; *Parmenides* 129-135; *Theaetetus* 184-186; *Sophist* 246-248, 251-259; *Timaeus* 27-52; *Philebus* 14-18; *Seventh Letter* 342-345; *The Seventh Letter* (authorship is disputed).

the actualization of the human intellect, which entails progressively resembling the divine *Nous*. It leads to (or sometimes just entails) the unification of the self with God (which will be discussed further up in more detail in section 4: Ascent). We will now resume with Plotinus' depiction of the transmission of the Ideas or Forms from the Divine Intellect to matter and how they became images. '*For each and every primary reality is not what is perceived with the senses: for the form on the matter in the things of sense is an image of the real form and every form which is in something else comes to it from something else and is a likeness of that form from which it comes.*' (V.9.17-20). This involves the form-donation process which began at the theogony, which will be elaborated here before proceeding to Plotinus' cosmology.

2.ii.f. Imaging: a Process of Formation-the Ideas and the *Logos/Logoi*

The first manifestation of imaging began in the divine Intellect, which Plotinus designated as an Image, the *Logos* or a trace of the One. The Intellect, being closest to the One, resembled the One more than any other entity. Yet there existed dissemblance as well. The Intellect was not the same as the One, which was absolute oneness, as it contained duplicity as well as multiplicity. Thus the relationship of the *Nous* to the One exemplified the general definition of 'image' in Plotinus' philosophy: it was always inferior to that which it imaged. The image was also always totally dependent on its original (VI.4.10.1-15). Everything here below had an existence in some way less authentic than that of its archetypes. As Plato, Plotinus expressed this dependence in two ways: by speaking of participation *methexis* or imitation *mimêsis*.⁴¹ The image was never a perfect copy; hierarchy was always preserved on account of the increased multiplicity in the image.

After having turned to the One and contemplated its source, the divine Intellect acquired from its source its own core substantial properties: Thought, Being and Life.⁴² The imaging procession was instigated with the generation and transmission of these properties and became inherent in the Ideas or Forms as the Thoughts of the divine Intellect, in other words, these were the Life or Being principles or archetypes for all existing things which would later come into existence. The *Nous* communicated these properties to the Soul in an act of generation or creation, as it reproduced itself by means of an expression (*Logos*). When the Soul longed to know her source, it turned to contemplate the Intellect and in doing so, she received the same properties of the Intellect and the Forms above her. This activity constituted her formation. In becoming an image (*Logos*) of the Intellect in her highest region, the Soul-Intellect accordingly transmitted the Forms further to that which came after her by means of a *Logos* -an expression and the reproduction of herself.

The Soul-Intellect as an image of the Intellect is always inferior to the divine Intellect, due to her greater multiplicity which substantiates her weakness. Yet by virtue of her highest region, the Soul is also always connected to the divine Intellect. Although the divine Intellect and Soul-Intellect are separate entities, it is sometimes difficult to differentiate between the two in the *Enneads*. The Intellect, having engendered the Soul, is closer to the One and more powerful than the Soul-*Nous*. Thus their resemblance is strong; yet by nature of the hierarchy of the Hypostases, there is also great dissemblance. From this point onward in Plotinus' cosmology, a transmission of the Ideas takes place through the generating process of the *Logos* and a parallel splitting up of itself into *Logoi*. The *Logoi* transmit the individual intellects and the Forms further down the line, ultimately, to matter.

41 A.H. Armstrong, "Platonic Mirrors", 147-181, 147-148.

42 The triad of Being, Life and Thought in the Intellect which will be of importance later in Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* in *Trin.*

Throughout this transmission, they continuously produce images within the hierarchy of being.⁴³

The World Soul was designated as an image of her source: the Soul-Intellect.⁴⁴ While contemplating the Ideas in her higher region-the Soul-Intellect, the World Soul communicated the Forms to her lower kin. She then became united with the Universal *Logos* and subsequently began to create by splitting herself into individual souls. These merged with the individual intellects, the *logoi*: that is, altogether the individual souls were then called *logoi*-, having an intellect as higher part. The World Soul's communication of Forms, including the individual intellects and souls, was what permitted Soul-Nature (the image of the World Soul) to be operative and productive. As evident here, the *Logos* principle is of seminal importance for fathoming Plotinus' vision of the formation of the universe. Furthermore, this entity or principle was of no negligible influence on Augustine's doctrine of creation and its influence was also present in his doctrine of the *imago Dei*. Before proceeding further with Plotinus' cosmology, it will be useful for the sake of clarity to reiterate the diverse functions and properties of the *Logos* principle which have come up in this exposition thus far.

2.ii.g. Synopsis: Plotinus' Doctrine of the *Logos* and the *Logoi* in the Process of Imaging⁴⁵

In the exposition of Plotinus' theogony, many different aspects of the *Logos* were mentioned. For example, the *Logos* was in regard to all three Hypostases an 'expression' which was always accompanied by a creative process or a reproduction of the Hypostases themselves. The first manifestation of the *Logos* took place in the realm of the *Nous* which was a *Logos* of the One. By contemplating its source, the *Nous* received the intelligible world. The *Nous* divided itself into individual intellects, each intellect comprising an individual *logos*. When the *Nous* expressed itself and the Soul came into being, the Soul turned to contemplate its origin. When the highest part of the Soul became Intellect, it expressed itself in the same way. The region of the Soul was the second level in which the *Logos* operated. We also saw in Plotinus' theogony that the World Soul eventually became the World *Logos* and subsequently divided itself up into individual souls. These individual souls contained intellects which were *Logoi* originally from the total *Nous*.

43 On matter and form in *Enn.*: e.g.: *Enn.* II.7.3.12-13; III.6.6, 12-15, V.9.5.17-19, I.8.8.13-16. Plotinus provides here a neatly systematic explanation for how the transcendent Ideas manifest immanently in matter. Fattal explains that Plotinus accomplished this by borrowing principles from Aristotle and the Stoa. He was aware of Aristotle's critique of Plato's positioning the Ideas in the realm of transcendence and of Aristotle's position on how the forms manifest immanently in matter. Plotinus was also familiar with Aristotle's doctrine articulated in *Categories of Being*. Yet Plotinus obviously did not completely accept Aristotle's critique of Plato's view on the transcendent Forms. Because, as we see in Plotinus' cosmogony, the Ideas are still the transcendent causes of all existing things. Plotinus borrowed the doctrine of the *Logos* from Stoic philosophy (which was in turn influenced by Aristotle's notion of the *logos*). Plotinus transformed this as well, as such, by 'de-materializing' the Stoic *Logos* and lending it its transcendent origin and functions. To explain how form conjoins with matter, Plotinus does not indicate that it is the pure transcendent Idea which penetrates and forms matter. It is only the image *eidōlon* of the transcendent Form which manifests in physical visible things. This image is inferior to *eidos*, the transcendent, divine Idea. *Logos et Image chez Plotin*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998) e.g.: 29-44. Plotinus also assimilated Aristotle's theory of Universal Intellect (as cause of all Being and as penetrating through all of Life by its *dynamai*) as well as Aristotle's characterization of the Universal Intellect as Thought and Being. But he transformed it by 'platonizing' it: by placing the location of the Ideas in the Intellect and then rejecting Aristotle's view on the Universal Intellect as the first and foremost cause of existence. Plotinus posits the ultimate cause as the One which is above all Thought and Being. Cf: Fattal, *Image, Logos, Mythe* (2009), 34-35; *ibid*, *Image, Mythe, Logos*, especially: "Image et Production du Monde chez Plotin, Une critique de l'image gnostique." 35-62; Halfwassen, *Plotin*, 17-19.

44 Plotinus calls the parts of the Soul 'Soul Sisters' e.g.: IV.3.6.14.

45 This excerpt is from L.K. Zwollo, "Plotinus' Doctrine of the *Logos* as a Major Influence on Augustine's Exegesis of Genesis" *Augustiniana* 60 (2010) 3-4, 235-261; 250-251.

Shortly we will deal with the lowest region of the Soul (Nature), where form and matter were brought together to make bodies for the individual souls. This constitutes the third level of the *Logos* activity where the visible world was fabricated by *Logoi spermatikoi*.⁴⁶ In sum, we have seen that the *Logos* was not only a creative expression, it was also an entity which divided itself into individual parts just as the Intellect and the Soul had done and functioned on three levels of existence: at the level of the *Nous*, of the Soul and of the visible world.⁴⁷ The divine *Logos* was hence transcendent as well as immanent. (The first two Hypostases were completely transcendent from the material world; Nature-Soul, like the *Logos*, was both transcendent and immanent.) In its transcendent divine existence, the *Logos* emanated originally from the One and delivered the intelligible Forms from the *Nous* to the Soul. In the sense world, the incorporeal *Logoi*, considered by Plotinus to be images of the eternal Ideas, were thus immanent in matter, which will be explained in the sub-section below. Plotinus also specified that the transcendent, divine *Logos* was identical to the Forms in the sense that it was a Form principle (for example in III.2.2.36). In the processes described above, the *Logos* served as representative of the Intellect in the lower realms of existence.⁴⁸ Through its creation-formation activities, it was directly responsible for the process of 'imaging'. Additionally, individual souls were designated with the term *logoi*.

In some passages, it appears as if the active, divine *Logos* could be a separate hypostasis, especially being designated -alongside the divine Soul- as the Maker of the universe. But this was not Plotinus' intention; the *Logos* is a divine function or force which exists and operates in conjunction with the three Hypostases.

A note of significance here is that the divine *Logos*, apart from being a creative and formative principle (III.2.2.36), is predominantly a principle of reason and order.⁴⁹ Within the production process, it provides the cosmos and the intelligible world with a rational foundation in compliance with set laws. Altogether, the *Logos* is the structure, the plan and the plot.

As will be explained in section 3, the divine *Logos* is also the origin of the reasoning facility in the human mind:⁵⁰ every individual soul is a reflection of it at the highest, transcendent level. It provides the human intellect with its mental structure which it needs to process and assimilate the images entering the perception organs and imagination. The human reasoning facility -*dianoia* or discursive reasoning- resides in the highest -the rational region- of the soul. Plotinus also attributed to the *Logos* an active and significant role in the soul's contemplation and longing for beauty⁵¹, accordingly, in her return to the One.

It also fulfills an important providential function in the world.⁵² As mentioned in Chapter II.2.iii.g., Augustine commended Plotinus for his principle of Divine Providence (*Civ. Dei* X.17) which was explicitly designated in the *Enn.* as the *Logos*. In this exposition, the doctrine of the *Logos* will be

46 III.2.2.20; III.7; V.9.6.11 and 19; The individual soul is the form of the body. The form is the forming principle or the *logos spermatikos* in the body and in things. Cf: Agaësse-Solignac, "Le *Logos* et les *Logoi* chez Plotin" in: *Bibliothèque Augustinienne* (=BA) 48, 654-657.

47 III.2.2.15-40; III.3.5.10; III.3.4.20, 25-30.

48 *Ibid*, III.2.11 and 15; V.9.6. / III.2.20-30; III.3.4. On Aristotle as Plotinus' source for equating the *Logos* with 'idea' *eidōs*. Cf: Fattal, *Logos, Image*, 32-33.

49 e.g.: II.7.3; III.2.14-15, III.3.4.5-10; III.8.8.13-16; VI.9.5.

50 IV.3.16, 7; III.2.2, 3; III.3.4.

51 Such as the *Logos*' association with Forms and contemplating Beauty, e.g.: I.6.2.27-28. For more on this subject, see: M. Fattal, "Beauté et métaphysique chez Plotin: le rôle du *logos* venu des dieux", in: M. Fattal (ed.), *Logos et Langage chez Plotin et avant Plotin*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003) 301-313.

52 Plotinus wrote two treatises on divine Providence: *Enn.* III.2 and III.3. See P. Boot *Plotinus Over Voorzienigheid Enneade III 2-3* [47-48] Inleiding, Commentaar, Essays, (dissertation), (Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, 1984).

predominantly treated in the context of the process of formation and imaging in the cosmos, as well as in Plotinus' psychology and epistemology. In the conceptual comparison between Augustine and Plotinus in Chapter VI (2.v.: 'Divine Mediation: *Logos* and *Verbum*'), the similarities and differences between these two divine entities will be analyzed and the influence shown of Plotinus' conception of *Logos* and *logoi* on Augustine's principles of *rationis* as well as on his conception of the creator *Verbum Dei* from his doctrine of creation. (This is introduced in this chapter in 2.iii.e. 'A Short Prelude on Augustine's Doctrine of Creation and Imaging'.) Now we will resume Plotinus' cosmogony and the creation of the material, sense world.

2.iii. Cosmogony of the Visible World

2.iii.a. Making Material Images: Joining Form to Matter⁵³

The visible world as we know it, is a product of the divine entities Nature-Soul and the *Logos*. To recapitulate briefly, Nature was the third and lowest region of the divine Soul. This Soul entity produced matter together with the *Logos*, the latter of which, at an earlier stage -in the realm of the *Nous*- had split itself up into individual *logoi*. (These individual intellects-*logoi* had been received by the World Soul who subsequently divided herself as well into individual souls. These were joined to these *logoi*-intellects.)

Now at the level of Nature, the *Logoi spermatikoi* serve as germinating principles or creative formative forces which carry the internal laws of growth and development of physical and material structures. They also contain the characteristics of the various species of living beings with the capacity to reproduce (and are as such designated as form principles). *Logoi spermatikoi* are like seeds which grow and evolve within matter, containing the growth potential and the structuring principles of matter and/or soul together. At this point, Plotinus' depiction of the production process becomes confusing. There are apparently *logoi spermatikoi* for the human body and as well as for the human soul. Additionally, Soul (Nature) and *Logos* (or *Logoi spermatikoi*) are so intimately intertwined in their tasks that it is difficult to separate their functions (V.9.6).

Nature-Soul creates matter, then transforms it by forming it, that is, endowing to matter the 'reasons'-*Logoi* which she had received from the World Soul (the second region of the Soul). Plotinus calls this Form-giving to matter a 'donation' by the *Logoi*. This donation of productive forces, intending to inform that which has no form, is completed spontaneously, instantly and without mediation. Plotinus also depicts the production of Nature-Soul in the following way: while receiving from the World Soul the Forms (the *Logoi*) and their illumination,⁵⁴ she subsequently illuminates matter and bodies (with the *Logoi*) thereby making them an image (*eidôlon*) of the Forms.⁵⁵ The *Logoi* donate to matter, as it were, the visible form or recognizable shape according to the laws of species.⁵⁶ Nature-Soul and *Logos*, according to Plotinus, are thus continuously producing –in analogy to the sun, in the sense that as long as the sun exists, it will always shine its rays down below.⁵⁷

53 Plotinus posits two kinds of matter: divine, intelligible matter (the Idea Matter) and physical, visible matter (II.4.5; III.8.11.4). See note 103./ III.8.3; IV.3.13 and 15; IV.4.39; V.9.6.11, 19; III.2.2.20; II.2.3.15-17. See Fattal, *Image, Logos, Mythe*, 38-45, notes 32, 33 and 37. For a detailed study of the relationship between matter, form and seminal reasons in Plotinus, cf: *ibid*, 51-56 and *Logos, Image*, 35-38; Plotinus' transformation of the Stoic theory of providential Universal Reason and seminal reasons, *ibid*, 30-31, note 1.

54 II.9.2 and 3.1-5.

55 V.3.8.4-9; II.4.5.18-20.

56 Cf: L. Zwollo, "Plotinus' *Logos*", 235-261, 251-252.

57 II.3.17 and 18. Armstrong criticizes Plotinus because he is sometimes careless in his usage of metaphors, as this case exemplifies to him.

2.iii.b. *The Making of Human Beings*

Both Nature-Soul and the *Logoi* are involved with the production of physical bodies which will house the individual souls.⁵⁸ A short recapitulation: when Nature-Soul came into existence from the World Soul, the World Soul also divided itself into parts, which became individual human souls or *logoi*. Hence, the human soul *psychê* was produced at an earlier phase than the human body. The body came into existence at the same time as matter. Plotinus speaks extensively about the descent of the soul into the human a body which occurs with illumination (for example in *Enn.* IV.3.9-13). At her embodiment, the soul then receives her sense perception (*aisthêsis*). We will now depart from the subject of how matter was formed and how the body came ensouled so that we can proceed to topics more relevant to this study, namely Plotinus' doctrine of the soul, its highest part, the intellect, and how the soul becomes an image of the divine Intellect and ascends to the highest principle. Plotinus' view on matter and soul however are important related aspects which will return in the discussions further up on his psychology and anthropology. But first, a final summary of imaging in Plotinus' cosmogony will be helpful. To do so, we will continue where we left off from the previous summary – at imaging in the divine world (in section 2.ii.e. and f.)

2.iii.c. *Synopsis: The Process of Imaging in the Cosmos*

Nature-Soul is an image of the World Soul. The World Soul is a more powerful entity than Nature, who is endowed with 'better reasons' than herself and who has contemplated the Ideas. Nature is also well anchored in the intelligible and thereby connected to the divine Intellect and to the One. This anchoring was established by the transmission of Ideas-Forms from the World Soul, as well as by Nature's imaging of (participation in) of the World Soul. The transmission occurred by mediation by the *Logoi*. Nature-Soul is able to produce the material world because it is united with the causal *Logoi spermatikoi*. The *Logoi*, as well as the Forms, are designated as *eidôla*. When the *Logoi* project form onto the matter, they cause things to manifest as visible *eidôla* as well. An *eidôlon* (*logos*, image) is hence an imitation⁵⁹ of the intelligible Form (*Eidos*). The *Logoi* here are also called traces⁶⁰ of divine forms in the Intellect (which were transmitted to the Soul-Intellect).

In sum, at the level of Nature-Soul, we have various images: *Logoi* in matter are themselves images of the transcendent, eternal Ideas or Forms, of which the transcendent, divine *Logos* is the collaborator. The *Logoi* will cause the sense world to become a reflection of the intelligible world. Accordingly, matter or physical bodies which contain these *Logoi* are also referred to as images, *eidôla*, in the sense of visual appearances *phantasiai* (which are also mental images). Logically so, because they appear before our physical senses. A point to underscore here is that individual souls are also designated as *Logoi*. These are images of the transcendent *Logos* (the World Soul or *Logos*) yet stated more specifically, the human soul *psychê* is an image of the All-Soul *Psychê*. (This important theme will be main subject of section 3.) Hence, the whole world is an image of Nature-Soul and *Logoi* (*Enn.* II.3.18) (which are images of the World-Soul and the Universal *Logos*). All visible things in the material universe are *eidôla* and are thus ultimately images of the Ideas-Forms in the Divine Intellect (VI.2.22.33-end). The human soul, by actualizing her intellect, is connected to the divine Intellect and the Ideas in a special way. Plotinus' process of imaging is hence closely allied to the

58 IV.7.2.22-25; II.7.3.1-12. Here Plotinus distinguishes between the terms *eidos*-the divine Idea and *eidôlon*-the form manifesting in matter.

59 *Mimêma* (V.9.3.35-37, III.6.6-19)

60 Trace (*ichnê*) and *logos* are expressed as equivalents in VI.7.37. (See note 24). Of interest is that the term trace is also used Augustine as 'sign': *signum* or *vestigium* to designate primarily the same thing: a reference to the divine. See *Trin.* VI.10.12, XII.5.5; Chapter IV.2.viii. and V.3.iii.e.

Ideas-Forms and is effectuated by the *Logos* which is the form giving principle. The *Logos* itself is a creative expression which structures the world by its activity of forming matter, the cause of the imaging process. The *Logos* itself is also an active structuring force in the human mind, as we will see in section 3.

This exposition has not exhausted Plotinus' use of images, because imaging permeates his entire philosophy. A few more examples which were not discussed here are: that science is an *eikôn* of perfect knowledge (V.3.4); time an image of eternity (III.7.1.17-20), sense perception is an image of discursive thinking or of contemplation (I.1.7). In sum, in Plotinus' philosophy, all things, beings, physical or divine manifestations share a common origin: the One. All things and beings ultimately image the One even if it is in some remote way.

2.iii.d. Synthesis: Properties of Images

In Plotinus' cosmology, imaging takes place on all levels of existence in a hierarchical fashion. Plotinus envisioned the cosmos as organized in a coherent and logical hierarchy. An image in Plotinus' philosophy is an inferior copy of its model or its direct source (V.9.5). It bears a resemblance to its source, but also a dissemblance, which is due to its inferior manifestation of being. Its increased multiplicity and the diminished creative power are a result of its distance from the One. The infinite multiplicity of images in the visible world is in stark contrast to the unity of the Ideas as well as the unity contained in the divine Intellect; the contrast is even greater in light of the most perfect, absolute unity of the One.

Through the process of imaging by the mediation of the *Logos*, everything is related to everything else in some way. As such everything participates⁶¹ in some way in the Being which exists above it. The *Logos* is the connecting thread between all levels of existence. There is always a trace of something higher in everything; matter contains divine traces as well. Because there is an invisible form principle *logos* in all material things, all these things contain light and beauty from the transcendent Forms above. In this sense, all existing things are 'living thoughts'.⁶² In the process of imaging on all levels of reality, and in particular, the level of the human soul as image of God striving to return to its source, Plotinus underscores the total dependence of all things on the divine.⁶³

There is a difference between the imaging occurring in the divine realm of Hypostases and that of the lower material images. From the *Nous* downwards, imaging is progressively weakened as participation in true Being decreases. There is an ontological demarcation line which lies somewhere at the lower level of Nature-Soul at the transition between intelligible and visible matter. But as we shall see below, this demarcation line seems less discernable in Plotinus' depiction of the relationship between the human and the divine Intellect. In any case, in the world of matter, the participation and degree of resemblance diminishes considerably. Visible matter and the world of sense perception make up the lowest form of existence: they are temporal, mutable and transient. Traces or images of the divine contained in visible things are not divine themselves, they are mere indicators of the upper immaterial regions, their causes. As such, the transcendent Forms (*eidê*) are not in themselves truly immanent in matter but are represented by their *eidôla* that participate in them in some way. Plotinus says of the material things: '*The forming principle (Logos) then, which operates in the visible shape, is the last, and is dead and is no longer able to make another...*' (III.8.2.30-35). These *eidôla*

61 e.g.: VI.5.8; also: I.6 2.13-14: '*We maintain that the things in this world are beautiful by participating in form.*' See note 73 for the differentiations in meaning of 'participation'.

62 VI.7.12.23-30. Cf: A.H. Armstrong "The Divine Enhancement of Earthly Beauties: The Hellenistic and Platonic Tradition" *Eranos* 53 (1984) 49-81, 68-75.

63 e.g.: V.8.3.17, 10.23-26, 11 and 12. V.9.2.21-23, etc.

are regarded as phantoms or ghosts (III.6.6-7) '*It is a ghostly image of bulk (eidôlon kai phantasma) ... It (LZ: matter) always presents opposite appearances on its surface, small and great, less and more, deficient and superabundant, a phantom which does not remain and cannot get away either, for it has no strength for this, since it has not received strength from intellect, but is lacking in all being.*' (III.6.7.13, 17-21). These statements reveal something significant about Plotinus' epistemology and the kinds of knowledge he differentiates, which will be discussed in section 3. In Plotinus' view, knowledge of material *eidôla* contrasts distinctly with the knowledge based upon their *eidê*.

The transmission of Ideas or Forms from the transcendent regions to Nature-Soul is also accompanied by a transmission of intelligible divine Light which originates from the divine Intellect and ultimately from the One. [Recall here Augustine's praise of Plotinus for his conception of the immaterial God of pure light (Chapter II.2.iii.f)] Thus the images manifesting in the material realm (which should include as well the human soul) possess a progressively diminished degree of light from the One due to their lower rank in the hierarchy of all things.

An aspect of importance which is involved in illumination from the intelligible region and in the imaging process is the act of contemplation. The offspring (images of their models) which were produced during the theogony were essentially a result of contemplation on the higher level of the Hypostases. Contemplation is primarily an activity of the Intellect and always entails turning inward and reflecting on something higher than oneself. The chain of contemplation in the theogony was as follows: the *Nous* contemplated the One and itself-the Intelligible World; the *Nous-Soul* contemplated the hypostasis *Nous* (the Ideas), the World Soul contemplated the Ideas in *Nous-Soul*.⁶⁴ Plotinus wrote that Nature produced without having contemplated.⁶⁵ Hence, the further one descends in the hierarchy, the more the power to contemplate diminishes. This was evident in Nature-Soul, yet this is even more evident in the human soul, because it is more occupied with the myriad of material images surrounding it than what is above it. This causes one to forget its source entirely or even how to contemplate.⁶⁶ Thus the soul must re-learn contemplation. She is stimulated in this development by love and beauty in their earthly manifestations (in for example *Enn.* I.3.1.29-end, -I.3.3). Thus contemplation and participation are intricately connected.

As we will see in the upcoming section, the human soul possesses an inherent inclination and desire to become one with its source. It can become an image of the Godhead by actualizing her intellect. This consists of contemplating the divine Intellect or the Ideas which effectuates an ascent, as well as the image imitating its model. '*...all things aspire to contemplation.*' (III.8.1.1-2). It is now useful to bring this lengthy exposition on Plotinus' theogony and cosmogony more into perspective with the goals of this study.

2.iii.e. A Short Prelude on Augustine's Doctrine of Creation and Imaging

In Augustine's doctrine of creation, treated in Chapter IV, we will see a great number of similarities in what we have just seen in Plotinus' cosmology and especially his system of imaging. His exegesis of the creation story in Genesis -in which he describes the origin of the soul and how the soul is an image of God- provides us with strong examples of correspondence: for example, his conception of the two phases of creation in which a similar ontological demarcation line of two realities are present: between the divine and the material world, the latter of which is perceived by the physical

64 The contemplation of the Ideas by the Hypostasis Soul serves as a paradigm for the human soul, for this is her ultimate goal which results from longing for knowledge (III.8.7-8.) See section 4 on the Ascent.

65 III.8.4.4. Or contemplates poorly.

66 Intelligible matter possesses Form, thus contains Being and for this reason it is capable of turning upwards. Visual matter cannot turn upwards because it has contains practically no being (II.4.5.33).

senses. Especially the creation of soul and body are treated in a parallel manner as in Plotinus' cosmology: each separately: the soul being created before the body. Turning to contemplate God and divine illumination are important elements in Augustine's doctrine of creation as well.

The question might arise as to why Plotinus' cosmology and especially his doctrine of the *Logos* has been delineated in such detail in the preceding subsections (2.ii.f. and g.). Here it was confirmed that Plotinus' notion of *Logos* was responsible for instigating the imaging process. In the upcoming chapter we will see that Augustine borrowed not only Plotinus' theory of Ideas for his doctrine of creation, but, likewise, his system of *logoi*. He used them to formulate his own doctrine of the rational principles *Rationes*, as the creation principles of the world. In this regard, Augustine made few changes to Plotinus' view and integrated these principles neatly into his Christian interpretation of Genesis.⁶⁷ In adapting Plotinus' system of Ideas and *Logos-logoi*, Augustine simplified these notions to some extent, yet included them in his exegesis in such a way as if these notions were self-explanatory, hence making it somewhat difficult for the modern reader. Thus this extensive summary of Plotinian doctrine of *Logos* in this chapter will facilitate the comprehension of Augustine's doctrine of creation considerably.

In the section above, we saw how Plotinus' notion of *Logos* was intricately allied with the intelligible world. This was also true for Augustine's *Rationes*: he made it clear that the terms *ratio* and *idea* were essentially synonymous and translated the Greek term *logos* into Latin as *ratio*.⁶⁸ Just as Plotinus' Ideas and *Logos* were located together in the universal Intellect, Augustine locates the eternal *Rationes* in the mind of the second divine Trinitarian person, the Word of God or the Creator. However he designated the Word of God or Christ, not with the term *Ratio* (in translating St. John's term *Logos Theou*) but *Verbum Dei*.⁶⁹

Augustine's interest in Plotinus' philosophy was, to say the least, not limited to the notions of Ideas and *logoi*. As we will see in the upcoming sections, the *Logos* and *logoi* also played a significant role in Plotinus' doctrine of intellect, his epistemology and how the soul became an image of the divine by means of an ascent. In the upcoming chapters on Augustine's *imago Dei* and *Trinitatis*, we will see how Augustine uses the term *ratio* as well to designate the individual soul and how he borrowed elements of Plotinus philosophy to describe his own (Christian) interpretation of the elevation of the image to God, which it images. Significant differences in Augustine are to be expected here (especially how he explicitly attributed to the human intellect -the image of God- to the world of time and space and not to the divine.) Yet striking similarities are present as well.

The complexity and lucidity of Plotinus' carefully thought out system of imaging as well as his doctrine of the Ideas and *Logos*, were obviously convincing to Augustine. Indeed, Plotinus' depiction of imaging provides a fascinating and thought provoking view of the cosmos. It demonstrates his appreciation for the beauty and good in the world around us, which was derived directly from the divine Good, the first and highest Hypostasis-the One, which substantiates his view that the world is inherently good. The logical and profound character of the Plotinian system was indubitably attractive to the bishop of Hippo.

Before proceeding to Plotinus' psychology and anthropology, which is anchored in the imaging process of the noetic and visible cosmos, a few remarks on the scholarly literature are of interest here. The literature regarding the influence of Plotinus' system of imaging on Augustine's doctrine

67 P. Agaësse and A. Solignac's article is instructive in demonstrating how the notion of *Logos* in Plotinus is employed in Augustine's doctrine of *Rationes*, concepts which directly involve the image of God. "Le *Logos* et les *Logoi* chez Plotin", BA 48, 654-657, which is elaborated even further in: L. Zwollo, "Plotinus' *Logos*".

68 *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, Essay no. 46, *De Ideis*.

69 *Ibid*, essay no. 63, *De Verbo*.

of creation usually mentions Plotinus or the Neo-Platonist influence on Augustine's doctrine yet elaboration with examples and explanation from the *Enn.* are often sparse.⁷⁰ This study, on the other hand, covers a much broader terrain than those mentioned in the note, dealing not only with the cosmology and theology of both thinkers, but also the ascent of the human image by knowledge and love. It will pinpoint and explain the Plotinian aspects more acutely and in doing so, it will fill in a lacuna in modern Augustinian research.

3. The Human Soul as Image: *Physis, Logos and Nous*⁷¹

3.i. Introduction

This exposition is headed towards a delineation of Plotinus' intellect and his epistemology. But in order to elucidate his doctrine of intellect, Plotinus' differentiation between the intellect and the rest of the soul must be highlighted as well, including his view on the relationship of the soul to the body and to the visible world. (For these aspects too show up clearly in Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Dei/Trinitatis*.) The unification of the World Soul with the Universal *Logos*, as relayed in the theogony from the previous section, was the starting point for the making of human beings. The World Soul divided herself into individual souls, which not only became conjoined with the individual intellects but subsequently became *logoi*.⁷² As such, Plotinus designated the individual *psychê* in general as an individual *logos* (IV.3.5.10-end, IV.3.8.17-20). The individual *logos* is in effect a collaborative 'expression' of the World Soul and Universal *Logos*. Thus it can be stated that the human soul was of divine and transcendent origin. The divine *Logos* transmitted the *logoi*-souls and the *logoi* containing the forms further to the lowest realm, to matter, in order to impregnate matter with form which included forming human bodies. In this way, the transcendent *Logos* saw to it that the human being became a composite of body and soul, and that the human *psychê* would become an image of all the levels in the All Soul *Psychê*.

70 For example, I. Koch's doctoral thesis "Image et dissemblance: étude sur la notion d'image chez Plotin et Saint Augustin" (Paris, 1997), sounds promising, yet this treatment is too general to be useful for my analysis. Furthermore it deals predominantly with the images on the material level of existence, and hardly touches upon the mystagogical aspects with which my study is deeply involved. I. Bochet mentions Plotinus in her article "Imago" in *AL*, and in fact provides the most extensive treatment as well as helpful references. However the references to the *Enneads* in her article are mainly short in content and are not elaborated («*Imago*», *A-L*, vol. 3. Fasc. 3/4, 509-520, 509). J. Sullivan's two-page treatment in his work on Augustine's doctrine of the image of God is also much too general. [*The Image of God, The Doctrine of St. Augustine and its Influence*, (Dubuque, Iowa: Priory Press, 1963) 5-7 and 10, 14-15]; In J. Lagouanère's likewise excellent work on Augustine's doctrine, the section on this topic bears the encouraging title "L'influence néo-platonicienne sur la théologie augustinienne de l'image". Yet this does not contribute any new insights on this matter. His treatment of the Neo-Platonist influences does not go any further than the most basic Plotinian influences such as *anabasis*, *epistrophê*, which are the most frequently mentioned and least controversial aspects in Augustinian-Plotinian studies. [*Intériorité et réflexivité dans la pensée de saint Augustin. Formes et genèse d'une conceptualisation*, 443-447]; Other studies listed here mention the influence of Plotinus' system of imaging on Augustine's doctrine of creation, but do not always elaborate on it in detail, such as M. Clark's «*Imago Dei*» in: *AttA*, 440-442, 441.; See also Chapter VI.3.i.a.

71 In the Greek text there are no capital letters; the modern reader must differentiate between the divine entities *Nous*, *Psychê* and *Logos* and their worldly counterparts in their context in Plotinus' psychology. The human variants are indicated here with low case. Fortunately, Armstrong's English translation makes this differentiation too. Sometimes Plotinus assists the reader by referring to the human soul as 'our soul' or 'us'. Yet there are still passages where the difference between divinities and humans remain unclear. This difficulty is aggravated when researchers fail to make the distinction as well, e.g. Booth, 1989.

72 W. Helleman-Elgersma relates the views of various authors (only up until 1980) on the problem of the articulation of the relationship between the individual soul and the World Soul: "Souls Sisters-A Commentary on the *Enneads* (IV.3 (27) 1-8) of Plotinus" (Dissertation VU University, Amsterdam, 1980) 89-102 on the origin of the soul.

There are several manifestations of *Logoi* at work here which in effect operate in two directions: one is the creative, form-giving *Logoi* which joins things together (a downward movement) and another which joins things and souls to entities on the higher, transcendent levels (an upward activity). In the upcoming sections, we will tread deeper into this terrain of the various levels of *Logoi* and of the soul: the differentiation between the formation process of the physical body, the lower and higher regions of the soul (iii.),⁷³ including the various images involved. A discussion of Plotinus' view on the divinity of the soul (iv. and vi.) will necessarily lead to an exposition on the subjects of matter, sin, evil and error (v.). The last section (vii.) provides a short recapitulation of Augustine's remarks on Plotinus.

3.ii. The Lower Soul *Physis*

The formation processes described above in which the soul joined a body and effectuated the creation of a human being now require more nuances.⁷⁴ Plotinus' differentiation between the images *logoi* in the visible world -which includes the human body- and the *logos*, the human soul, are intricately interwoven yet subtly distinct.⁷⁵ There is a differentiation between soul and body in that the origin of the human soul is divine and the body, being of matter, pertains to the realm of material things which it perceives with its physical senses (*Enn.* I.1; III.8.1-3). Things of matter are bound to the dimensions of time and space, are transient, mutable and contain *logoi*. The *logoi spermatikoi* in matter (or the 'reason principles') incorporate natural production power. They contain the latent powers of development but cannot be considered a thought or knowledge. They do contain a certain intelligence but this is not the same intelligence which, for instance, the higher soul possesses.⁷⁶ A physical body is capable of reproduction and growth because it contains life as a result from the body conjoined with the soul, its life principle. The body is connected to the lower part of the soul (IV.3.12-13).

There are several important points to underline here: the first is that the body may be intricately connected to the soul-nature, yet there is a part of the soul which is incorporeal: the rational soul, which will concern us in the next subsection of this exposition. Secondly, this differentiation between the *logoi*-images in matter or the human body and those in the soul- can be further substantiated in the following way: an *eidôlon* in the material image, is a mere manifestation of the intelligible Form *eidos*. It is essentially the shape or form of something material which renders it recognizable to the physical senses. There is indeed a certain participation between the *eidos* and material *eidôla*, yet for Plotinus, this does not constitute the most significant participation; it is not the same kind

73 On the different parts of the soul, e.g.: IV. 8. 8 and the descent of the soul into bodies.

74 However, not mentioned here are the passages in which Plotinus describes how the soul produces her own physical body. A more complicated subject which this study likewise does not explore is Plotinus' depiction of the relationship between the human soul and her physical body. There is much literature on this subject.

75 Fattal, *Image, Logos, Mythe*, 45-note 37; 51-note 42; *Enn.* IV.8.7; Cf: Pigler, *Plotin, l'amour*, 145-198; Rist, *Road to Reality*, 85-95. Rist points out individual souls are considered by Plotinus to be 'fallen', in contrast to the World Soul, which remains in the transcendent realm (*ibid*, 122).

76 Fattal, *Image, Mythe, Logos*, 45-notes 37-51. *Logoi spermatikoi* in the sense of images of the forms in the physical body are to be understood as "acts of the Soul" in the bodies of animals and living beings: *ibid*, 49-note 40 and *Enn.* IV.3.10, 11-12. For the problem of the composition of the *Logoi spermatikoi* in the world of the senses and the intelligible in Plotinus, see also Fattal, *Logos, Image*, 26-44.

of participation occurring in the higher soul.⁷⁷ This is because these material images, the *eidōla* or the *logoi* in matter are ‘phantoms’ *phantasiai*,⁷⁸ non-being or mere appearances of Being.⁷⁹ The inner form *eidōlon* of a material or physical object or body *-logos spermatikos-* is invisible to the human eye; it can only be perceived in the visual shape of material thing itself by the body’s sense perception. However, in sense perception, there is no direct perception or contact with the transcendent Form. This gives the *eidōlon* its status as epistemological phantom. That is, the forming principle *Logos* which operates in the visible shape is also dead.⁸⁰ Consequently, we can say that sense-perception in itself is unable to perceive the true Form in things, due to the limitations of perceptive power of the physical senses. This three-sided phenomenon is what makes matter in itself, in Plotinus’ view, limited in epistemological power, as the *eidōla* do not and cannot represent reality at its truest.⁸¹ The perception of the real Form can only take place in the higher soul, on the condition that the soul actualizes her intellect. We will now depart from Plotinus’ conception of the physical part of the human soul and proceed further with his doctrine of the higher regions of the soul.

3.iii. The Rational Soul *Logistikon*: *Logos* and *Nous*

Sometimes Plotinus refers to the human soul as *eidōlon* of a divine archetype (*eidos*) (*Enn.* V.9.13.5-end).⁸² Yet the real power of the human soul lies in the fact that it is an image of the deity, the

77 Plotinus describes the relationship between the material object as image to its Idea with the term participation (<*metachō*, and e.g.: *metousia*, *metochē*, *metochos*). This signifies that the object owes its existence to the Form which it images. Because matter has no consciousness there is obviously no conscious desire to know its source. The participation between the material object as images of intelligible Ideas simply exists. Because the human soul has awareness, it is capable of mentally conceiving its resemblance as well as dissemblance to the Godhead. A true participation would infer a full participation which is consummated by unification of the image with the deity it images; as a dynamic, conscious contact or communication between the intelligible world and the human intellect, which is an image of divine Intellect. For example: ‘For we and what is ours go back to real being and ascend to that and to the first which comes from it, and we think the intelligibles: we do not have images (*eidōla*) or imprints (*tupous*) of them. But if we do not, we are the intelligibles. If then we have a part (*metexomen*) in true knowledge, we are those;’ (*Enn.* VI.5.7.1-5). The human intellect participates in the divine Intellect by contemplating its Ideas and enjoying the unification with the Intellect. See the following subsections in 3.iii. on Intellect.

78 See Fattal, *Image, Logos, Mythe*, note 28 for a further explanation.; In comparison, Augustine’s term for images as product of the imagination are *phantasmata*. Augustine’s term *phantasiae* consist essentially of recollection of images stored in the memory. In essence, Augustine’s articulations generally have the signification as Plotinus.

79 e.g.: III.6.7.27-30. For an explanation of this see Fattal, *Image, Logos, Mythe*, 53.

80 i.e. VI.2.20.1-16, etc. Emilsson on discursive thought, *Intellect*, 176-213; also III.8.2.30-35, III.6.19.28: that matter and the sense world are sterile.

81 ‘...the forming principle...which operates in the visible shape is the last and is dead.’ *Enn.* III.8.2.30-35. Also III.6.7.13-14, etc.

82 Does an Idea exist for each human individual? This question has relevance for determining the relationship between the divine *Nous* and the human *nous*. This issue has been addressed by e.g. Blumenthal, “Did Plotinus believe in Ideas of Individuals?”, *Phronesis* 11, 1966, 61-80; Rist, “Forms of Individuals in Plotinus”, *Classical Quarterly* 13 (1963) 223-231; *ibid*, “Ideas of Individuals in Plotinus, a reply to Dr. Blumenthal” in: *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 24, no. 92 (1970) 298-303; A.H. Armstrong, “Form, Individual and person in Plotinus” *Dionysius*, I:49-68 (1977) 49-68; P. Kalligas, “Forms of Individuals in Plotinus: A Re-Examination”, *Phronesis* 42, 1997, 206-227; C. Tornau, “Qu’est-ce qu’un individu? Unité, individualité et conscience de soi dans la métaphysique plotinienne de l’âme”, *Les études philosophiques. Plotin et son platonisme*, 2009, 333-360; P. Remes, *Plotinus on Self, The Philosophy of the We* (Cambridge: University Press, 2007) 76-85 and Emilsson, *Intellect*, 207.

If Plotinus posits that for each individual intellect there should be a corresponding Idea, then it would follow that every soul would an image of an Idea. In my view, such a position is unsustainable for the following reasons: Plotinus designates the human intellect as an image of the divine Intellect; as such, the human *nous* imitates the divine *Nous*, especially in its turning to contemplate the One. This turning *epistrophē* is not accomplished by the Ideas, but of the whole entity, Intellect. Furthermore the human intellect imitates the divine Intellect’s contemplation of its own Ideas. This contemplation constitutes self-knowledge. See section 4.ii for further delineation on this subject.

All-Soul, who in turn is an image of Intellect (V.1.2-3). The human soul reflects its source in the sense that it likewise consists of three regions: the highest, the intellect (*nous*), a reasoning capacity (*logos*) and nature, conjoined with the physical body (*physis*). Plotinus designated the lower soul *physis* as image of the higher soul-*logos*; which is in turn an image of its *nous*.⁸³ The two highest regions of the soul (*logos* and *nous*) are labelled by Plotinus as the ‘rational soul’⁸⁴ *logistikon* whose primary engagement is thinking and contemplation. The *logistikon* is the seat of self-consciousness;⁸⁵ its activities are immaterial.⁸⁶ (Recall that Augustine praised Platonism for their conception of the incorporeal mind and thinking as an immaterial activity in *Civ. Dei* VIII.6.) Plotinus described two modes of thinking of the rational soul which pertain respectively to the *logos* and the other pertaining to the *nous*: *dianoia* and *noësis/theôria*.⁸⁷

The individual *logos* possesses the capacity to reason *logismos*, to think discursively *dianoia* and in short, to come to an understanding of things by logical reasoning, analysis and synthesis. *Dianoia* is a function which forms knowledge derived from visual images from the external world of *eidôla* which enter the soul through sense perception *aisthesis* as representations of physical images *phantasiai* or *tupoi*. They are then stored in the memory (*mnêmê*).⁸⁸ The recovery of these images committed

83 In Plotinus there are additional images within the human mind: not just images from physical visual perception in the mind or memory or fantasized images as in the imagination-, but, for instance in the case of modes of thought: *dianoia* (discursive reasoning) is an image of *noësis* (contemplation). Plotinus also says there are images of oneself in oneself created by one’s mind. The various ‘selves’ are images of one another as well.

84 M. Stróżyński notes correctly that the term ‘rational’ here does not necessarily connote thinking discursively but rather having a structure which is in accord with reason. On the same vein, God is trans-rational but this does not mean that for Plotinus God is not rational. *Mystical Experience and Philosophical Discourse in Plotinus*, (Póznán: Publishing House of the Póznán Society for the Advancement of the Arts and Sciences, 2008), 202-note 67.

85 The term ‘consciousness’ is a modern term, yet it is not only deployed throughout Armstrong’s translation but in this study as well. For an overview of contemporary philosophical discussions concerning the application of the modern conception of ‘consciousness’ to ancient concepts, see “Introduction” in: S. Heinämaa, V. Lähteenmäki, P. Remes, (eds.) *Consciousness: From Perception to Reflection in the History of Philosophy*, (Dordrecht: Springer Science & Business Media, 2007) 1-10. The term ‘consciousness’ used here corresponds to the general, conventional definition as indicated in *The Oxford Illustrated Dictionary*, 1981: Conscious – ‘aware, knowing; with mental faculties awake or active; self-conscious (of actions etc.) realized by the actor.’ Consciousness – ‘state of being conscious: totality of a person’s thought and feelings or a class of these; perception (of, that).’ See also Chapter V.3.ii.f.: ‘Excursus on Love and Knowledge in Modern and Ancient Terminology’.

86 *Enn.* V.1.10: Plotinus mentions here that Plato speaks of this part of the soul as ‘the inner man’ (*Republic* IX 587A7). Mentioned again in *Enn.* I.1.10.15.

87 e.g.: I.1, I.2.3; V.1.3, V.5.1-2; Much study has been done on Plotinus’ two modes of thinking and perception as well as their capacity for knowledge acquisition. e.g.: Emilsson, *Intellect*, 177-213; Pigler, *Plotin, l’amour*, 161-173; and Remes, *Plotinus on Self*. Chapter 3 in Remes’ book examines two modes of the rational soul corresponding to two selves. She provides an elaborate discussion on these two modes and their interdependence and differentiation (125-178). Emilsson points out that *logismos*, inferential thought or reasoning and discursive thought *dianoia*, entail successive reasoning and are temporal; in contrast to the *dianoia* or ‘reasoning’ of the World Soul: pp. 183-186; e.g.: *Enn.* III.7.11 and 12. M. Atkins analyses Plotinus’ use of the terms (*dianoia*, *logistikon*), questioning whether these are alternative ways for Plotinus to refer to intellect, the undescended soul. Arguing against Chaignet and Schweizer (and apparently with Blumenthal, *Psychology*, 100). Atkins concludes (I believe correctly) that *dianoia* is not intellect, but rather an image of intellect. M. Atkins, *Plotinus Enneads V.1*, (1983) 60-63.

88 Some comments on Plotinus’ conception of memory: Plotinus treats memory in two texts: IV.6 and IV.3.25-IV.4.5. Memory and imagination are closely associated here. Plotinus generally regards sense perception or memory as delusory; therefore the designation of delusion includes, accordingly, the imaginary images as well. (Augustine regards the imagined images (Latin:) *phantasmata* usually in a negative light as well.) For Plotinus, memory does not occur in intellect because Intellect is an eternal realm and possesses no thinking back to the past in the dimension of time. Divine Intellect thinks itself eternally and is one with itself as object; this is not memory or recollection (*anamênesis*). (Augustine’s doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* does include memory as a function of the intellect, e.g. *Trin.* X, as in remembering God. Plotinus deals with this as well (see note below). This general summary on memory is from E. Moore “Plotinus” “b. Sense perception and Memory” in: *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, A Peer-reviewed Academic Resource*, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/plotinus/>, April 2014.

to memory has to do with an imaging-making faculty (*phantasia*, *phantastikôn*, *phantazesthai*) (*Enn.* IV.4.3) or the imagination of the rational soul. The individual soul orders or governs the material realm by bringing these ‘types’ before the *nous* in an act of judgment (*krinein*), which completes the movement or moment of sense-perception. This perception is not a passive imprinting or ‘stamping’ of a sensible image upon a receptive soul; rather, it is an action of the soul, indicative of the soul’s natural, productive power (for example in V.6.3). This power of sense perception of material appearances is in this perspective indistinguishable from memory (*mnemes*). The lower rational soul *logos* recollects thanks to certain innate Ideas which it inherently knows and by which it is able to perceive what it perceives.⁸⁹ Additionally, the knowledge it accumulates, based upon the *eidôla*, is obtained by an inferential grasp of its object. Its representational and propositional knowledge is only piecemeal and is characterized by its temporality.

3.iii.a. Two Kinds of Knowledge

As such, we see here that the reasons in the human soul *logoi spermatikoi* (unlike the *logoi* in matter which have a formative function) have a gnosteological function and are integral to discursive thought. The lower rational soul is activated by knowledge obtained by sense perception but essentially seeks the understanding of the divine Ideas. The *logoi* in the rational soul will lead the soul up to higher regions of itself, although its perception of them, at the level of the soul-*logos* is incomplete. (This will be explained in more detail in the following section 4 on the ascent, subsection (iii.) on the contemplation of the Ideas.)

The soul-*logos* is hence the joining point between scientific knowledge and true knowledge, *epistême* or *gnosis*; true knowledge is equated to *sophia* or wisdom. E. Moore⁹⁰ seems to suggest

89 In the passage referred to in the note above in *Enn.* IV.6, the soul recalls her experience in Intellect (Heaven) of herself contemplating and being one with the intelligibles. Recollection *anamnêsis* in the context of contemplation of Ideas is intellection and a recollection of experiencing heaven between reincarnations. (See Plotinus on Reincarnation, *Enn.* III.4.2 and IV.3.9.) The human intellect sees or recollects the true Ideas but tends more to forget the images of sense perception as they are of a false nature. Yet it retains the former. Plotinus explains two kinds of memory in the context of the soul descending after a visit to the intelligible realm, as illustrated in the following passage:

‘But if it (LZ: the soul) comes out of the intelligible world and cannot endure unity, but embraces its own individuality and wants to be different and so to speak puts its head outside, it thereupon acquires memory. Its memory of what is in the intelligible world still holds it back from falling, but its memory of the things here below carries it down here; its memory of what is in heaven keeps it there and in general it is and becomes what it remembers. For remembering is either thinking or imagined (*ê noein ê phantazesthai*); and the image (*phantasia*) comes to the soul not by possession, but as it sees, so it is disposed; and if it sees sense-objects, it sinks low in proportion to the amount of them it sees. For because it possesses all things in a secondary way, and not so perfectly [as Intellect], it becomes all things, and since it is a thing belonging to the frontier between the worlds, (LZ: the sensible and the noetic or divine worlds) and occupies a corresponding position, it moves in both directions.’ (IV.4.3)

See also Plotinus’ notion of memory in: Remes, *Self*, 111-119; R.A.H. King, *Aristotle and Plotinus on Memory* (Berlin, NY: Walter de Gruyter, 2009) on Plotinus: 106-217). Although Plotinus’ conception of memory was likely influential on Augustine, this (as well as the theory of recollection) will only receive limited treatment in this study.

90 Moore’s summary includes the Greek terms and is nonetheless very helpful: ‘We may best understand Plotinus’ theory of perception by describing it as a ‘creation’ of intelligible objects, or forms, from the raw material *hulê* provided by the corporeal realm of sensation. The individual souls then use these created objects as tools by which to order or govern the turbulent realm of vivified matter. The problem arises when the soul is forced to think ‘through’ or with the aid of these constructed images of the forms *eide*, these types *typoi*. This is the manner of discursive reasoning that Plotinus calls *dianoia*, and which consists of an act of understanding that owes its knowledge *epistême* to objects external to the mind, which the mind, through sense-perception, has come to grasp *lepsis*. Now since the objects which the mind comes to grasp are the product of a soul that has mingled, to a certain extent, with matter, or passivity, the knowledge gained by *dianoia* can only be opinion *doxa*. The opinion may indeed be a correct one, but if it is not subject to the judgment of the higher part of the soul, it cannot properly be called true knowledge *alethes gnosis*.’: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/plotinus/#H3>. See note 88.

that Plotinus designates true knowledge with the term *gnosis*.⁹¹ Yet this claim would be misleading, as it would tend to associate Plotinus with the *gnosis* of the Gnostics of his age, which he explicitly refuted (*Cf. Enn. II.9: Against the Gnostics*). Moreover, Plotinus utilizes two general terms which translate to English as ‘knowledge’: *gnôsis* and *episteme*. He uses them interchangeably for both worldly and true universal knowledge.⁹² Augustine on the other hand, uses two different terms for two different kinds of knowledge: *scientia* and *sapientia*: respectively, worldly knowledge and wisdom.⁹³

Plotinus depicts the acquisition of true knowledge in a number of ways. When the *nous* is oriented to its source, the *Nous*, it is illuminated directly, enabling it to contemplate the Ideas *noêsis*. This part of the human soul has the capacity of a fuller understanding of the Ideas,⁹⁴ its acquisition of knowledge is non-inferential, intuitive and immediate. Its grasping of truth is non-representational, non-temporal and infallible as well.⁹⁵ The contemplation of Ideas can also be achieved through discursive thought, however, the difference is that this manner of contemplation entails an understanding in separate fractions, as in how one understands scientific theories and related concepts, but not the whole of science. The knowledge obtained by the *logos*-soul is derived from the elaboration of sense data (*eidôla*) and is generally deemed as opinion. On the other hand, knowledge obtained by the intellect is derived from the contemplation of the true Forms (*eidê*) themselves, which constitute true reality. The individual human intellect *nous* imitates the Universal *Nous* in that it contemplates itself, as well as that which is higher than itself. It also resembles the *Nous* in that it is exclusively involved with the intelligible realm and never passes outside of it.⁹⁶ Further resemblances and differentiation between the human intellect and the divine Intellect will be elaborated in the section Ascent, on the contemplation of the Ideas.

Parallel to the various *eidôla*, the levels of the soul and different kinds of knowledge, are Plotinus’ various distinctions of ‘the self’.⁹⁷ O’Daly suggests that these distinctions roughly correspond to the type of knowledge they produce: a physical self *phytikon* or *aisthêtikon* with its sense perception

91 ‘For, again, since knowledge (*tês gnôseôs*) of other things comes to us from intellect, and we are able to know (*ginôskein*) intellect by intellect, by what sort of simple intuition could one grasp this which transcends the nature of intellect?’ III.8.9.19-20. (See also e.g.: I.4.10.16; I.8.1.10); A review of the different usages of the term *gnôsis* provided by *Lexikon Plotinianum*, 217-218 demonstrates the diversity of meanings of *gnôsis* in Plotinus.

92 Rist points out that Plotinus uses the term *gnôsis* more frequently than *episteme* (Rist, *Eros, Psyche*, 168). Ferwerda, *Enneaden*, 918.

93 *Trin.* XII-XIII. See Chapter V.3.iii.f.: Augustine’s ‘Epistemology-Lower and Higher Forms of Knowledge’.

94 e.g. V.3.5.44: here the triad *nous-noêsis-noêton* is utilized to illustrate this.

95 Remes, *Self*, 129.

96 II.9.2, IV.3.12, IV.8.8, V.1.10-12: (...’*kai hê hêmetera psychê theion*’); Plotinus goes so far as to say that the human *nous* does not really belong to the rest of the soul (V.3.23-27). In that sense, it does not truly pertain to the individual ‘I’ but to ‘we’. Cf. S. Rappe, *Reading Neo-Platonism* (Cambridge: University Press, 2000) xiii. See section 4.ii.a. of this chapter.

97 e.g.: I.1, I.1.4.24; VI.7.4.7; IV.3. and 4; G.J.P. O’Daly, *Plotinus Philosophy of the Self*, (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1973) 3, 1-12, 20-26. Other literature on Plotinus’ conception of the self: H.C. Puech, *En quête de la Gnose I. La Gnose et le temps et autres essais*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1978) [“Position spirituelle et signification de Plotin” (1938): “On Plotinus and self”, 78-82]; R. Mortley, *Plotinus, Self and the World* (Cambridge: University Press, 2014); P. Hadot, *Plotin ou la simplicité du regard*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1997, 2010) 25-44; S. Rappe, “Self-knowledge and subjectivity in the *Enneads*” CCP (1996), 250-274; R. Sorabji, *Self: Ancient and Modern Insights about Individuality, Life and Death*, (Oxford, 2006); P. Remes, *Self*; Remes expresses her hope that her ‘book will help in placing Plotinus on the map of development of the Western notion of the self. He was still missing from Charles Taylor’s *The Source of Self* (1989)...and although there are studies such as P. Cary’s *Augustine’s Invention of the Inner Self*, 2000 that duly acknowledge Plotinus’ influence on Augustine and through him to later thinkers, these kind of studies do not explicate Plotinus’ thinking in its own right but as prelude to Augustine.’ (p. 19); I am in complete agreement with this last statement. The present study is unable to give the subject of ‘the self’ in Plotinus and Augustine, and the subsequent Plotinian influence on Augustine, the attention it merits. Because of its complexity of this topic, the treatment here is necessarily superficial.

applies to the lowest *eidôla* or to soul-nature. The inner or 'rational self' *logistikon* is a combination of the soul *logos* and *nous*; the 'historical self' would then be a combination of the *phytikon* with its discursive thinking: soul-*logos*- *dianoêtikon*. Then there is the highest self (*nous*) which is the true or ideal self, corresponding to *noêsis* or contemplation, related to knowledge derived from the *eidê* (*Enn.* V.3.1; III.9.3, III.9.6, 7-end, *etc.*). Plotinus does not always make these distinctions entirely clear. Yet generally speaking, Plotinus' conception of 'selfhood' encompasses a gradual process towards an ideal end. A similar process is also present in Augustine's anthropology.⁹⁸ Let us now return to the subject of the divinity of the soul which was brought up in Chapter II.3.iii.

3.iv. The Divinity of the Human Intellect (1)

Throughout the *Enneads*, Plotinus states that the human soul is divine. For example:

Our soul then is a divine thing and of a nature different [from the things of sense], like the universal nature of soul; and the human soul is perfect when it has intellect; and the intellect is of two kinds, the one which reasons and the one which make it possible to reason. (V.1.10.14)

Here Plotinus is differentiating between two kinds of intellect, the human and the divine Intellect; the human intellect is completely dependent on the divine. Nonetheless, these kind of statements in the *Enneads* are confusing, because as we saw in Plotinus' cosmology, divinity is exclusively pure immaterial, transcendent and eternal. Certainly the human soul, as image of the tripartite All Soul, has a higher ontological status than matter and the body. Plotinus also says that the human soul consists of a unity, just as the unity All-Soul (IV.7.10). Yet we have just seen how the lower soul is connected to the human body and discursive thinking to the *logos*-soul; although incorporeal in its nature and activity, the soul-*logos* nonetheless directly processes sense impressions of material and temporal nature and is in this way also connected to the physical realm.

Taking this into consideration, several questions arise here: the first is: what is the exact status of the human soul according to Plotinus in relation to its divine origin and its connection to divinity? This question already came up in the discussion of Augustine's criticism of the Platonism and his apparent omission of critique as it pertained to the Platonists. His critique of the divinity of the soul was solely addressed to Manichaeans (Chapter II.1.ii.f. and II.2.v.c.). He also claimed that Platonists distinguished the Creator from the creation (*Civ. Dei* VIII.6, X.2). Yet the quote above and the explicit assertion that the soul is divine (and this is but one of many such instances) suggest the opposite: the consubstantiality of the soul with the divine upon actualizing her intellect.⁹⁹ Another question arises as well: if Plotinus claims that the highest part of the human soul, the intellect, is divine, how does Plotinus view the relationship between the human soul -which is attached to a body- and its intellect? The latter of which, Plotinus claims, just as the hypostasis Intellect, is completely immaterial and never departs from its own realm (*Enn.* V.1.3). How can the intellect which is closest to divinity 'cohabitate' with the embodied lower soul? And how can the soul be considered to possess a unity AND be divine

98 Remes, *Self*, 3: in antiquity, an established topic such as 'the philosophy of the self' did not exist; there were no works entitled *On Self and Person* (*ibid*, 4). Plotinus' terminology includes the recurring use of the reflexive pronoun *heauton* (oneself) and the third person pronoun *autos* which mean 'he', but also emphatically 'himself' (*ibid*, 9).

99 Examples in which Plotinus expresses the intellect as equal to the intelligible world: *Enn.* V.8.4.7, VI.7.12.22-30, III.4.3.22, IV.7.10.34-36.

if the intellect is completely immaterial and her two lower regions are not? To complicate the matter even more, Plotinus often speaks of the 'undescended intellect'.¹⁰⁰

As noted at the beginning of this chapter,¹⁰¹ Blumenthal acknowledged the difficulties here against Armstrong (the translator of the *Enneads*), who denied that there were any serious inconsistencies in Plotinus' psychology.¹⁰² Yet what are the consequences involved in this 'mixed' situation? To answer these questions we will have to turn to other topics which are deeply rooted in Plotinus' psychology. His view on matter, evil and error will contribute to the clarification here. We will then return to these questions in the subsection 'Divinity of the Soul (2)' (3.iv.) in order to pursue a satisfying solution.

3.v. Matter, Evil, Sin and Error

For Plotinus there are two kinds of matter: intelligible matter¹⁰³ and physical, visible matter. Our concern for now is the latter. Visible matter for Plotinus is the most inferior of all forms of existence as it is the furthest away from the first Hypostasis, the One or the Good. The first Hypostasis is not only our origin but our ultimate goal. In this perspective, matter stands at the very opposite end of the all-encompassing and unifying principle, permeated with images of infinite multiplicity. As furthest from the Good, it is, at least semantically speaking, 'bad'. There are some passages in the *Enneads* which give the impression that Plotinus believes matter to be the epitome of badness

100 (V.I. 11.1-3, V.3.3, etc.). Plotinus also describes the descended soul (which is attached to the physical body) and the undescended intellect (which is not) in *Enn.* IV.8 *On the Descent of the Soul into Bodies*: 'And if one ought to dare to express one's own view more clearly, contradicting the opinion of others, even our soul does not altogether come down, but there is something of it in the intelligible;...For what is grasped by the intellect reaches us when it arrives at perception in its descent, for we do not know everything which happens in any part of the soul before it reaches the whole soul;' IV.8.8.1-15. (The latter enigmatic sentence suggests *i.e.* that the soul is unconscious of her higher region, the intellect.)

There is much literature on the fall of the soul and the undescended intellect in Plotinus. The questions raised in this chapter make up only a part of the entire problematic. It will not be helpful to give a full scale exposition on this issue for this study; a general impression will suffice. For more references, see the notes below.

Remes recognizes these discrepancies mentioned above in her comment on *Enn.* III.4.3.21-24 -in which Plotinus declares 'we are the intelligible universe': 'Because of Plotinus' understanding of human souls as divine, as having the unfallen part or being in direct contact with the intelligible, he is at pains to explain the fact that human souls are nonetheless embodied and live their lives in the realm of imperfection and evil.' (Self, 184). Emilsson's excellent book on Plotinus' Intellect deliberately evades these questions, as well as the question regarding the relationship of the human intellect to the divine Intellect (207-note 21 and 212-213).

101 H.J. Blumenthal, *Plotinus' Psychology, His Doctrines of the Embodied Soul*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhof, 1971), 1-7, *ibid.* "On Soul and Intellect" CCP 1999, 82-104; 83, 92; This problem in Plotinus is also recognized by Brachtendorf, especially concerning the finite and the infinite Intellect. *Struktur*, 27-32; S.R.L. Clark, "Plotinus: Body and Soul" CCP (1999), 275-295, here: 282-288; M. Atkins, *Plotinus Enneads V.1*, (1983) 42, 62-64.

102 Blumenthal argues against A.H. Armstrong who maintained that: 'there is no question of far-reaching inconsistencies in his philosophy arising from the incomplete assimilation of irreconcilable views.' (Blumenthal, *Psychology*, 3, note 7). A.H. Armstrong, *The Architecture of the Intelligible Universe, in the Philosophy of Plotinus*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1940), 26; *ibid.*, "Studies in traditional anthropology II: Plotinus", *Downside Review* 66 (1948), 409. Armstrong explained that Plotinus' assimilation of irreconcilable doctrines from e.g. Aristotle, other Platonists or Neo-Pythagoreans, was likely the cause for these inconsistencies to which Blumenthal refers. Armstrong did acknowledge later that these problems were also dealt with and solved by later Neo-Platonists, such as Iamblichus, *Mysteries*. "St. Augustine and Christian Platonism" in: *Augustine, A Collection of Critical Essays* in: R.A. Markus (ed.) (NY: Anchor, 1972), 5-37, 8. See also Blumenthal "On Soul and Intellect", CCP (1999), 82-104.

103 'Intelligible matter' as contrasted with 'visible matter' was merely mentioned in note 53 on the creation of the visible world. Before visible matter could exist as itself, there must have been an intelligible prototype from which the world was made, which existed before the coming of existence of the visible world. Rist explains in the context of Plotinus' view of evil the difference between intelligible matter and matter as such: Intelligible matter, once produced, has the power to turn back to its source (*Enn.* V.3.11; II.4.5) and receive its form from that source (*Road to Reality*, 124). The matter of the visible universe has no such power whatsoever; it is dead and can only acquire the semblance of form by a completed act of Soul (III.9.3).

(I.7.3.20; I.8.4.1-20).¹⁰⁴ Yet if matter is bad, then the same could be said of human life in the material world, or the human body.

Such a conclusion begs further explanation, because Plotinus does not always unambiguously view matter as being evil itself. Seen from the converse, all things which exist derive from the One, the Good; on account of their origin, all things, including matter and the human body are essentially of a good nature. Matter, bodies and even the entire cosmos, are images of eternal Beauty in the intelligible world which is itself perfectly beautiful and good. Plotinus does recognize the evil in the world and subsequently explores its cause. Its direct origin cannot be the divine world, because the Hypostases (as perpetuators of that Good) stand in close proximity to the One, the absolute Good. Physical matter contains substantially less Being than divine entities; it is in fact non-being. Because of this status, matter contains the potential for doing evil. Matter may possess darkness or emptiness, however it is not the 'evil-doer' itself. Evil is merely a shortage of good, the insensitivity to what is good (*Enn.* II.4.16.16-24; I.8; III.6.11.44) or even the absence of good (I.8.1). The young Augustine found this aspect of Plotinus' philosophy most interesting as it helped him to distance himself from the Manichaean conception of good and evil. He described the Plotinian conception of evil as *privatio boni* in *Conf.* VII. (See Chapter II.1.ii.b.).

Regarding matter itself from another perspective, it originates in the region of Nature-Soul (V.2.2.30), the lowest region of the divine, transcendent Soul. Plotinus says that Nature-Soul has lost sight of her origins and because of this, she, together with matter, is also deemed as one of the potential causes of evil (II.3.17.18-25; II.4.5). The consequences of these statements are manifold. First of all, the inception of real evil is apparently to be found in the lower region of the human soul and as such, its manifestation is limited to the realms connected to or associated in some way to the material world. The highest region of the human soul, the intellect, on the other hand, is beyond error, sin and evil.¹⁰⁵ It does not even experience painful affections of the soul (III.6.2-3). By virtue of this purity, it is distinguished from the lower region of the rational soul, the discursive reasoning faculty and its knowledge, which can indeed potentially err and sin because these are allied to the human body and the images in the material world (III.2). The images *eidôla* in themselves are of a transient, changeable, thus potentially delusional nature.

Evil can also occur, according to Plotinus, due to the human soul forgetting her divine origin: her Father and God, the Universal Intellect and also the One. This happens once the soul is born into this world, in other words, descends into a physical body (for example: I.1.12) thereby losing

104 See Armstrong's introductory remarks to the treatise III.6: *On Impassibility* (*Enneads*, vol. III., 206-207) on Plotinus' negative remarks on matter. Also Rist, *Road to Reality*, 129.

105 e.g.: I.1.9.1. V.5.1.54-end. Why is the intellect beyond sin? Because the intellect is purified from all images of material things, *eidôla*, which are essentially phantoms and an epistemological dead end (i.e.: *Enn.* III.8.2.30-35, III.6.7.13-14, etc.). The knowledge produced from *eidôla* is opinion and is conducive to illusion, vice and even stupidity. These occur only in the lower soul connected to the body. The purification of the soul occurs when seeing the Ideas in the *Nous* (which includes Virtues). Further Plotinus says that the intellect is always turned to the Good (V.5.12). In that sense, no evil or evil-doing is possible for it.

the recollection where she came from.¹⁰⁶ (This makes up the basis of Plotinus' conception of the 'fall of the soul': the descent of the soul into a body and into the material realm. See note 100.) Consequently, the soul begins to value and pursue things which are inferior to her heritage and true self. Nonetheless, the soul is able to remember her origins again (V.1; IV.4). This recollection, *anamnesis*, is related to the human memory (see note 88), but it also plays a part in the contemplation of the intelligible world.¹⁰⁷ This contemplation entails an ascent, moving away from the sense world of matter, to the interior of one's own mind, to higher regions where the origins of the world can be perceived.

Thus, in regard to matter and bodies, it is important to keep in mind that Plotinus' philosophy establishes a hierarchy of realities: matter and physical bodies are at the lowest end of existence. In order to remember the origin of one's soul, one must learn to put aside or even forget one's lower existence. However this does not make the material world superfluous or even essentially 'evil'.¹⁰⁸ The world for Plotinus is essentially good and beautiful, because of its participation with the divine (*Enn.* I.6.2.13-14). One requires physical existence and the physical senses, for gathering knowledge. Gathering knowledge based on material images is the inception of acquiring universal, true knowledge. Studying philosophy is a means of redemption or liberation from the world where evil exists.

The fact that people are sinning¹⁰⁹ and/or suffering¹¹⁰ all the time could then be attributed to the fact, as Plotinus indicates, that humans neglect to unfold their full potential consciousness as *nous* (V.1.12; III.2). Evil or vice is essentially founded upon illusory or wrong thinking. Sin entails mistaking phantoms *phantasiai*, material or physical 'images' *eidôla*, for true reality, falling in love with them as it were and identifying oneself with them (IV.4). Therefore, humans who cannot contemplate well will be more prone to doing evil. Contemplation is a function of the rational soul: the seat of the

106 Plotinus points to the soul itself (*logos*) as to where evil can originate, in its pre-incarnational existence in the World Soul before it reaches the Soul-Nature: 'Now the universal rational principle (LZ: the World Soul-Logos) includes both good and evil things; evil things are parts of it too. It is not that the universal rational principle produces them but that it is the universal principle with them included. The rational principles are an activity of an universal soul and their parts of soul-parts; but as the one soul has differing parts, so correspondingly do the rational principles differ, with the result that the works also differ which are their ultimate products.' (III.3.1.2-10). It is not likely that Plotinus believed that the Universal Logos-World Soul to be the causes of evil in the world. They are merely the origins of individual souls. These *psyche-logoi* were installed into a human body at the realm of Soul-Nature. Plotinus suggests here that the individual human souls-*logoi* already led lives of their own or were capable of good and evil while they existed in the realm of the World Soul-Logos; as if he intended to mean here in their pre-incarnational abode (or between incarnations), such as in 'Heaven' (e.g.: IV.3.15.1).

107 In V.8.4, Plotinus describes a blissful existence which he designates as 'Heaven' *Oouranos* in the realm of the *Nous* which the soul experiences between incarnations. The soul inherently has knowledge of this realm through its pre-incarnational phase of existence which is forgotten at birth. At that time, she contemplated the intelligible world.

108 Armstrong, "Earthly Beauties", 75; *Enn.* III.2.13, 17-27; Porphyry tells in his *Vita Plotini* that Plotinus hated his own body, which seemed to have perpetuated the misunderstanding that Plotinus' philosophy was anti-world and anti-corporeal.

109 Fattal, *Plotin chez Augustine*, 74-note 121: 'Chez Plotin, on l'a vu, la notion de péché est totalement absente.' In this note, Fattal reiterates Plotinus' 'fall of the soul', the distance of the soul from the divine, its orientation to matter and also *tolma*, audacity -as if Plotinus did not intend to equivocate these with sinning or suffering. Fattal is explaining Plotinus in the context of Augustine's doctrine of sin, where there are in fact many differences. The differences in Augustine have to do with the notion of Christ who takes away the sins of the world and Augustine's emphasis on confessing one's sins to Christ to purify the soul, and to obtain forgiveness and salvation. Yet in my view, the difference between Augustine's and Plotinus definition, as to what 'sin' actually entails, is, in my opinion, essentially not so large as Fattal is making them out to be.

110 Suffering -as in experiencing affections, passions, negative emotions and pain. As a result of their egoism and longing for material gain, people (or more specifically souls-*logoi*) war with each other (III.2) which results in suffering and sin. Plotinus' term for sin in the quote above is *to hamartêma*. Cf.: *Treatise I.8 On What Are Evils* analyzes matter, evil, the darkness, passions weaknesses etc. of the soul.

power of judgment over the material images. Persons who can contemplate the Good or the Ideas (which Plotinus views as true reality) will establish virtues in themselves and temper the passions of the lower soul. Acquiring virtues are a means of purifying the soul in order to see the Intellect and the Intelligible World. In order to become virtuous, one becomes just, good and pious; one strives to acquire truth, resemble God and contemplate the Ideas.¹¹¹ These notions are synthesized in the following quote:

*The nature of that higher soul of ours will be free from all responsibility for the evils that man does and suffers...But if opinion and reasoning belong to the soul, how is it free from sin (pōs anhamartētos)? For opinion is a cheat and is the cause of much evil-doing. Evil is done **when we are mastered by what is worse in us -for we are many-** by desire or passion or an evil image. What we call thinking falsities is a making of mind-pictures (dianoia phantasia) which has not waited for the judgment of the reasoning faculty –we have acted under the influence of our worse parts, just as in sensation the perception of the joint entity may see falsely before the reasoning facility has passed judgement on it. **The intellect is either in touch with the proceedings or it is not**, and so, sinless: but we ought rather to say that we are in touch with the intelligible in the intellect or we are not-with the intelligible in ourselves; **for one can have it and not have it available.** (I.1.9.1-15)*

Plotinus further specified the origin of evil as the soul's exclusive self-orientation as well as to particular decisions of individuals (III.2).¹¹² For example:

*The partial soul then is illuminated when it goes towards that which is before it –for then it meets reality- but when it goes towards what comes after it, it goes towards non-existence, but when it does this, **when it goes towards itself, for, wishing to be directed towards itself it makes an image of itself, (pros autēn gar boulemenē to met' auton poiei eidolon autēs) the non-existent**, as if walking on emptiness and becoming more indefinite; and the indefinite image (eidōlon) of this is in every way dark: for it is altogether without reason and unintelligent and stands far removed from reality. Up until this time between, it (LZ: the partial soul) is in its own world, but when it looks at the image again, as it were directing its attention to it for a second time, it forms it and goes into it rejoicing. (III.9.3.7-end)*

Rist, referring to this passage, points out an important element in Plotinus' philosophy which is not always expressed explicitly but is significant here as well as in the discussion of how Augustine regarded the human will. Rist interprets the passage above as follows: the soul is carried to itself, when the will¹¹³ is set on itself (*pros autēn gar boulemenē to met' auton poiei eidolon autēs*). In doing so, it produces an image of itself¹¹⁴ which comes after itself and is non-being (LZ: which is therefore a false self-image). Rist also refers to Plotinus' statement in V.1.1, that it is the will (of souls) to belong to themselves which contributes to bringing evil to the world and makes them forget their divine

111 *Enn.* I.2; I.6.6, 1-12; VI.2.18.15.

112 See *Enn.* IV.8.4.10-end and Armstrong on self-isolation as sin in Plotinus (*Enneads*, vol. IV, 408)

113 Augustine's definition of will *voluntas* is more elaborated than that of Plotinus. At any rate, Plotinus does in fact emphasize that in order to actualize the intellect, the will must be oriented to the good: the Godhead (*Enn.* I.2.4).

114 See notes 78 and 82 concerning imaging in the human mind. Of interest here is that Plotinus says there are images of oneself in oneself created by one's mind. Augustine makes the same claim. A self-image based upon material images is a false one (*Trin.* X.6.8)

Father (the divine *Nous*). This 'self-willing' pertains to Plotinus' conception of *tolma* 'arrogance' or 'audacity' (*Enn.* V.1., etc.). Yet *tolma* additionally entails the prime motive of differentiation from one's source which begun at the separation of the *Nous* from the One. Self-willing thus makes up an integral part of the creative process inherent in all beings and affects the individual soul as well. It equally involves a 'descent' -the opposite movement of turning to one's source (*epistrophê*). Once descended however, Plotinus says, one is never completely separated from one's source.¹¹⁵ *Tolma* also involves turning away from the free universality of its higher state to bind itself to particulars -a state of self-isolation or individualism (IV.8.4).¹¹⁶ In this way, *tolma* constitutes a twofold sin: turning away from one's higher source and self-isolation. Thus, the potential cause of evil in Plotinus' thought in this sense is the conscious and active will.

There are other aspects of the quote above which are useful to highlight in this context. Plotinus generally depicts the soul as turned in one of two directions. Upwards is to virtue, beauty and godliness; downwards is to matter, the human body, vice, darkness and to the condition of weakness in the soul.¹¹⁷ Plotinus' conception of matter, evil and sin is subject of deep complexity which actually deserves a more extensive treatment than I have given it here. I have omitted many scholarly discussions on this subject. Instead I have attempted to limit this exposition predominantly to aspects which are directly relevant to Plotinus' conception of images and imaging. Before leaving this topic, we will conclude with the following comments of C. Horn, which might clear up any misconceptions. He warns that we should not mistake the metaphysical evil of matter for the moral evil in the soul of the individual (*Enn.* I.8.14.44-51, III.2.4.36-44). Although matter, according to Plotinus, is *per se* evil, it is morally indifferent. When the human soul is turned to matter, it tends to assume a morally deprived identity. Matter (LZ: or corporeality) is neither bad in the moral sense nor evil in the sense of being an antagonistic second principle independent of the One (LZ: as depicted in Manichaeism).¹¹⁸

3.vi. The Divinity of the Intellect (2)

3.vi.a. The Difficulties of the Soul; Defining the Intellect

The subsection above illustrated Plotinus' depiction of certain difficulties with which the soul must struggle. We will elaborate on some of these here. The soul's problems began with the condition

115 E. Song has formulated some interesting conclusions concerning Plotinus' view on the soul's orientation and his 'ethic of descent'. This consists of a two-fold ethic of caring: taking care of oneself, of the world and others. He explains the statements in which Plotinus seems to contradict this: (*Enn.* IV.8.7.1-8, VI.9.7.20-28; VI.7.31.21; and V.8.6.11). *Aufstieg und Abstieg der Seele Diesseitigkeit und Jenseitigkeit in Plotin's Ethik der Sorge*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009) 159-end of chapter: "Schluss".

116 Rist, *Road to Reality*, 123; See Armstrong's note on Plotinus and self-isolation at IV.8.4 (*Enneads*, vol. IV, 408). See also N.J. Torchia, *Plotinus, Tolma and the Descent of Being. An Exposition and Analysis*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1993).

117 'So just as when one goes up from virtue one comes to the beautiful and the good, when one goes down from vice one comes to absolute evil, taking vice as the starting point. One will contemplate it with the contemplation which belongs to absolute evil and participate in it when one becomes it: one enters altogether into "the region of unlikeness" when one sinks into it and has gone falling into the mud of darkness; for when the soul has fallen utterly into vice, it no longer has vice, but has changed to another nature, a worse one (for vice which is mixed with anything of its contrary is still human). So it dies, as far as the soul can die, and its death, while it is still plunged in the body, is to sink in matter and be filled with it, and when it has gone out of the body, to lie in matter till it raises itself and some manage to look away from the mud: this is "going to Hades and falling asleep there." ' *Enn.* I.8.13.12-end.

Note the term here 'region of unlikeness' *tôi tês anomoiotêtos topoî*, which Augustine likely borrowed from Plotinus for his famous passage in *Conf.* VII.10.16 to indicate the state of alienation from God: *in regione dissimilitudinis*. Augustine also associates sin and evil with the death of the soul in *Trin.* IV, (e.g. IV.12.15) a notion he also found in the letter of the apostle Paul (Rom. 5:12).

118 C. Horn "Plotinus" in: F. Sheffield and J. Warren *Routledge Companion to Ancient Philosophy* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 596-609, 601.

of having forgotten her origin (V.1.1). When a soul incarnates into a body, she arrives in oblivion. In order to recollect her divine origin (which she knew before being born into a physical vehicle), she must activate that part of herself which is closest to the divine, the intellect. Plotinus says that this part of the soul is in most people inactive or neglected (V.I.12). Rist explains Plotinus' viewpoint in the following way: there are activities in the *nous* which are normally unknown to us, just as we have perplexed and unconscious desires which are only brought to surface when we grasp them by our facility of sense or our facility of reason or both. Thus the highest part of the soul always remains above in the intelligible world and will not be recognized by us unless we have attuned to the whole of the soul and live in accordance to it (*Enn.* IV.8.8.10-11).¹¹⁹ In other words, Plotinus advocates that we must become aware of the *nous* in ourselves, its powers of perception-our 'inner eye' and then fine-tune our focus. Thereby we will not only become conscious of our origin within ourselves but acknowledge as well our dependence upon it. In order to find true happiness and to better understand ourselves and God, we must be able to grasp the completely immaterial intelligence,¹²⁰ and become our true self, imitating the perfection of the divine *Nous*.

Difficulties occur when turning to the physical world as a reference for all reality. This will not only incite sin, but also illusive thinking or mere opinion) based upon material images. The latter pollute the soul and blind her from perceiving true reality. The human will must know to turn back to its origin in order to become happy and to become happy one must become as good, pure and virtuous as the Hypostases are.

It is important to note here that the entire book IV of the *Enneads* is devoted to the human soul and two treatises in particular are entitled *On Difficulties About the Soul* (IV.3 and IV.4). Yet the solutions to the questions posed in 'The Divinity of the Intellect (1)' are not always found there. In fact, one must search throughout the entire oeuvre before discovering even a sparse assertion on the relationship between the intellect and the lower soul, or the relationship between the human intellect and the *Nous*. Now we shall review some of these passages. The following is a salient example of one of Plotinus' descriptions of how the soul becomes an image of divine Intellect: by increasing its resemblance to it, by seeing Intellect and becoming godlike. This passage illustrates the richness of nuances in Plotinus' view on the human intellect and its relationship to its divine counterpart.

*The remaining possibility then, is for the soul to have received an intelligent life, as trace of the life of Intellect...It is such a kind that it apprehends itself more clearly, but we apprehend it by means of it; by reasonings of this kind our soul is led back up to it, considering itself to be an image (eikona) of Intellect, as its life is a reflection and likeness of it, and when it thinks it becomes godlike and intellect-like; and if one asks it what sort of thing is that perfect universal Intellect which has primary knowledge of itself, it first comes to be in Intellect or makes room for Intellect to exercise its activity, and shows itself really in possession of the things of which it has the memory (mnêmên) in itself so that through soul which is its image (eikônes), **one can in some way see Intellect, through the soul which is brought about more precisely to its likeness, as far as a part of soul can come to likeness with Intellect.** (V.3.8.35, 44-end)*

Here Plotinus typically describes the actualization of one's intellect and assimilating the properties of the *Nous* as if it is normal and or even automatic. But the last sentence in this quote '*as far as a part*

119 Rist, *Road to Reality*, 85.

120 *Enn.* 1.4: *On Well Being*, e.g.: I.4.4.7-8, I.4.16.

of soul can come to likeness with Intellect’ is a nuance which indicates that this is not at all such a simple matter. The difficulties the soul must undergo in order to attain this goal are suggested in the continuation of the text:

9. It is probable then, that he who intends to know what Intellect really is must know the soul and the most divine part of soul. This could happen also in this way, if you first of all separated the body from man and, obviously, from yourself, and then the soul which forms it and, very thoroughly, **sense-perception and desires and passions and all the rest of such fooleries, since they incline so very much towards the mortal.** What remains of the soul is this which we said was an image of Intellect **preserving something of its light**, like the light of the sun which beyond its spherical mass, shines around it and from it. (V.3.9-10).

This quote illustrates an important matter. Plotinus indicates here a real potential in the highest, mostly unconscious part of the human soul to eventually possess or experience directly some real kind of divinity or light. Every soul definitely bears an inherent potential to *become* intellect which is the image of Intellect. It is only this higher region of the psyche which can potentially unite with the divine Intellect and subsequently become an image of the *Nous*. (In this way, the human soul-intellect will mirror the activity of the divine Soul prior to its creative act, when it turned to the *Nous* to contemplate her source. The Soul then became one with *Nous* and received its properties, the intelligible world, which enabled her to become a *Nous*, but only in her highest part.) Yet in the passage above, Plotinus advocates, as he often does, the not-easy task of stripping away all the lower facets of self-consciousness (sense-perception, desires, passions, fooleries) in order to come to the realization or pure perception of itself as an immortal image of the divine Intellect. Yet if or when this should happen, the soul will see that it only possesses a small quantity of this divine light, analogous to sunshine from the sun, ‘*preserving something of its light*’. We can conjecture from this passage that, among other things, the human soul, with its attachment to its body and the material world, cannot perfectly duplicate this activity of its divine model. If this goal were ever to be realized, the human soul may intensify its experience of the divine, will become *nous*, but will not become the *Nous* or the divine demiurge. It will become not a god, but god-like. As indicated in the quote above, the soul actualizing her light, will not assimilate ALL of the divine Intellect’s light. This is substantiated in the following passage mentioning -only in passing as it were- the difference between the human and the divine Intellect.

But when he reaches higher principles...He will leave that behind (LZ: his lower nature) and choose another, the life of the gods: for it is to them, not to good men, that we are to be made like. Likeness to good men is the likeness of two pictures of the same subject to each other; but likeness to the gods is likeness to the model, a being of a different kind to ourselves. (Enn. I.2.7.24, 27-30)¹²¹

Especially the final clause, ‘*likeness to the gods is likeness to the model, a being of a different kind to ourselves*’ indicates Plotinus’ view that the substance of the human intellect is lesser than that of the divine Intellect. Therefore he could not have intended that the human intellect was or would ever be equal in divinity to the divine Intellect. The following short statement underscores this concept even

121 ‘*Homoiôsis de hê men pros toutous, hês eikôn eikoni homoiôtai apo tou autou hekatera. Hê de pros allon ôs pros paradeigma.*’

more concisely. 'If then the generator itself is Intellect, what is generated by it must be more defective than Intellect, but fairly close to it and like it.' (V.4.2.1-3).

We have touched on topics here which predominantly pertain to the subject of the ascent to God. Considering the problems concerning Plotinus' position of the divinity of the soul (articulated in 3.iv.), we are now able to confirm that Plotinus did indeed differentiate between the soul's actualized intellect and the divine Intellect, yet these confirmations were mostly found in different contexts other than those treating the intellect itself. We can also confirm here, that Plotinus' subtle differentiation of the intellect and the Intellect was most salient in the context of imaging: an image cannot be equal to that what it images. Recalling Plotinus' cosmology, it is evident that the soul-intellect had a divine origin; it was designated as an individual part of the divine Intellect and the World Soul (treated in III.2.iii.b.). We did not however solve the problem as to how Plotinus must have considered the differentiation between the consciousness of the intellect *nous* and its lower rational counterpart. This issue will come to clarity in the next section (4.iii.a. and b.) on the ascent in which Plotinus' depiction of the elevation of consciousness to divine realms will be treated. Here further questions concerning the soul's divinity will be also raised.

3.vii. Augustine's Remarks on Plotinus

Many things for which Augustine praised Plotinus in *Conf.* and *Civ. Dei* in Chapter II were key features in this exposition on Plotinus' philosophy: the conception of evil as being the absence of Good; the conception of God as completely immaterial; the soul or human intellect as immaterial (for example, its activity of thinking); the participation of material things with their exemplars or archetypal Ideas; material or physical things containing references to the divine as in images or traces, although matter in itself contains no divinity; Plotinus' depiction of the ascent of the soul: the inward, upward turn to God's illumination. Augustine would agree wholeheartedly with Plotinus' designation of the origin of sin in the soul -the will- and the notion of potential evil being the result of the soul's involvement with the physical body or the material world. In *Conf.* he depicted clearly the difficulties of elevating oneself to God, in particular, of the will, which tends to turn away from God. His exposition there resembles in some way those which were indicated here in Plotinus' psychology, yet there are some significant differences as well, which will be taken in to consideration in Chapter VI.3.iii. The reason for Augustine's refrain from attacking the Platonists in *Conf.* or *Civ. Dei* for their notion of the divinity of the soul is now becoming clear: while writing both books, he understood Plotinus' philosophy well enough to have recognized the nuances in his psychology which counteracted the explicit statements referring to the soul's divinity. However we are not finished with this issue yet; it will be examined more thoroughly in Chapter VI in light of the entire complex of conclusions.

Many other conceptions of Plotinus were shared by Augustine, as we will see in Chapters IV and V. Just to name a few: they included his exegesis of Genesis 1:26, in which he specified the highest part of the soul, the intellect, as the image of God. He dealt with images in the material world and the soul as image. He proclaimed in his doctrine of creation that in order to understand God one must distance oneself from all material images, putting aside worldly concerns. Most important of all, redemption of the soul was envisioned in the actualization of its highest part, the intellect. This entailed becoming a better image of God, becoming God-like, not a god himself. In Augustine's case, becoming Godlike was becoming Christ-like. Additionally, in Augustine's delineation of the image of God as Trinity, we see many similarities, for instance with Plotinus' division of the rational soul into two parts, a lower and a higher. The higher, the intellect, was, as in Plotinus' epistemology, distinguished from discursive thinking. Augustine also defined different kinds of knowledge along the same general lines as Plotinus, between worldly and universal knowledge.

4. The Ascent. From Images to Ideas: Intellectual Contemplation and the Soul's Ascent to Beauty.

4.i. Introduction

The theme of the soul's ascent to the divine, *anabasis*, was not only an essential element in Plotinus' philosophy,¹²² it was certainly one of the most attractive aspects for Augustine in developing his doctrine of the *imago Dei/Trinitatis*. Augustine's step-by-step Platonist accounts of the ascent from *Conf.*, discussed in Chapter II.1.c. and e., involved the movement of the soul: starting from the realm of senses, then inward to its immaterial region and then upward to God's (immaterial) illumination. This exposition on the Plotinian ascent will show in greater detail how a human soul (*logos*), as image of the Hypostasis All-Soul, ascends to the highest principle, the One, via the actualization of her intellect.

Plotinus' depiction of the ascent will be approached here in two general contexts: through acquiring knowledge *episteme*, *gnôsis* and by the drive of love (*Erôs*) by beauty. Both were of enormous interest to Augustine. Especially in *Trin.*, Augustine's fusion of self-knowledge and self-love shows clear traces of Plotinus' views on both subjects. These are likewise the central themes in the comparison between Augustine's *imago Trinitatis* and Plotinus' intellect as image of *Nous* in Chapter VI.3. As such, they form the crux of the final analysis and conclusions of the main inquiries of this study.

As in Plotinus' treatments on the human being as image, the theme of the ascent is thoroughly spread out throughout *The Enneads* and discussed in different contexts, such as beauty, light, love and knowledge. It could be said that one of Plotinus' main objectives is to describe in full what the ascent to divine transcendence entails through all possible angles. According to Porphyry, his student, Plotinus himself experienced the ascent to the first Hypostasis four times.¹²³ One of Plotinus' most famous accounts of the ascent is in the context of beauty from the treatise *On Beauty* (I.6). This was popular in antiquity and noteworthy of mention here for a number of reasons. First of all, because there is a broad consensus among scholars that Augustine had read this treatise, witnessing the references from this treatise in his works.¹²⁴ The second is because Plotinus' notion of beauty is strongly connected to his notion of *Eros*. However, I.6 will not be the central focus of this exposition because love is only mentioned there sporadically. Other treatises of Plotinus are devoted fully to

122 Literature on Plotinus' account of the ascent is generally integrated in studies of the intellect/Intellect or love. As such the list here is not comprehensive. A.H. Armstrong, "Chapter 15. The One and the Intellect"; *ibid*, "Earthly Beauties, 68-75, *ibid*, "Platonic Mirrors", 147-181; A. Bertozzi, "On *Eros* in Plotinus: Attempt at a Systematic Reconstruction (with a Preliminary Chapter on Plato)" Dissertations, (2012). Paper 295 http://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/295; Pigler, *Plotin, l'amour*; Rist, *Eros and Psyche*; Stróżyński, *Mystical Experience*; P. Hadot, *Plotin simplicité*; H.C. Puech, *En quête de la Gnose I. La Gnose et le temps et autres essais*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), 70-81.

123 *The Life of Plotinus*, 23, written by his student and close friend, Porphyry (included in Armstrong's translation of the *Enneads*.)

124 Treated in Chapter II.1.ii.a.; see Chapter II, notes 47, 50 and 66. Such as Plotinus' treatise V.1. (*On the Three Primary Hypostases*) is considered by the majority of researchers to be one of the *libri platonicorum* which Augustine had read. Others are, e.g.: *Enn.* I.6 (*On Beauty*), V.3. (*On the Knowing Hypostasis*). The responses to this question are so numerous that they cannot be listed in their entirety. R. Kany, *Augustins Trinitätsdenken Bilanz, Kritik und Weiterführung der modernen Forschung zu "De Trinitate". Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 22*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007) 247-263; R. Rombs, *Saint Augustine and the Fall of the Soul*, (Washington D.C.: Catholic University Press, 2006) 26-27, 28, 32; F. van Fleteren, "Porphyry" in *AttA*, (1999), 661-663; M. Fattal, *Plotin chez Augustin* and L. Zwollo, "Plotinus', *Logos*" 2010, 236-237 provide a short overview and bibliography of responses to this question.

the theme love, such as VI.7¹²⁵ and III.5 *On Love*.¹²⁶ Here the theme beauty also plays an instrumental role as it is what moves one to love and to desire union with the beautiful. Thus the force of love and desire is what drives the soul to return to the One.

Another treatise of Plotinus which is generally accepted as Augustine's source is V.1, already mentioned in the context of his cosmology and theogony, which also contains a depiction of the ascent. This treatise, as well as the others on knowledge and self-knowledge, such as V.3 and V.5, are predominantly focused on an ascent to the divine Intellect; the treatises concerning beauty and love on the other hand, give a full description of the union with the One while passing through the Intellect. In every account of Plotinus' ascent, the contemplation of the intelligible world plays an instrumental role. Thus for this exposition many different treatises will be useful for both themes of knowledge and love.

As discussed in 'On the Divinity of the Intellect (1) and (2)' (section 3.iv. and vi.), there still remains some unanswered questions concerning Plotinus' view on the divinity of the soul and on the relationship of the human intellect to the divine Intellect. As discussed there, Plotinus' descriptions of the human *nous* are sometimes so closely associated with the divine *Nous*, that a decipherment is required to determine which is which. This is a problem which especially occurs in his depictions of the ascent. For this reason, this section will elaborate on the ways in which the human intellect resembles and differs from the divine Intellect (ii.). Another problem pointed out in the last section concerned the lack of clarity in Plotinus' distinction between the consciousness of the human *logos* and the *nous*, and their different modes of thought. This was left hanging in that section and thus will be addressed here as well.

This section will begin with an exposition on Plotinus' account of the *Nous*' relationship with the One, which was described earlier (2.ii.b.), on how the *Nous* came into existence (ii.a.). Other aspects of the divine *Nous* are important to take into consideration, such as its contemplation of its own Ideas and its self-knowledge (ii.b.). Contemplation and self-knowledge will also be discussed in the context of the human *logos* and *nous* (iii.a. and b.). Regarding the discussion of the divinity of the soul in section 3, this section includes an exposé on Plotinus' depiction of the eventual descent or 'failure' in the realm of the *Nous* (iv. and iv.a.). Plotinus' accounts of the ascent by knowledge and union with the Intellect will be followed up by a treatment on the ascent to the One through *Erôs* (v.). This will deal with Plotinus' equivalency of love and desire (v.b.) and accordingly, the manifestation of love on all planes of existence: of the senses, through the soul in the intellect and beyond (v.c.-e.). Subsection (vi.) will provide a complete synthesis of Plotinus' account of the ascent by love and knowledge. At the end of this chapter (vii.), a handful of similarities to Augustine's doctrines of knowledge and love will be noted, serving as a prelude to the treatment of Augustine's doctrines and to how he made use of certain elements in Plotinus' philosophy.

4.ii. The Kindred Nature of the Human Nous and the Divine Nous

The material from the previous section on the intellect already included a kind of epistemological ascent. To schematize this briefly, it dealt with sense perception and the two kinds of knowledge, discursive and intuitive contemplation. The images taken in by sense perception from the soul's outer environment entered consciousness and were recallable by the powers of memory. These material images were judged by the higher consciousness, which entailed a collaboration of the two functions

125 VI.7: *How the Multiplicity of Forms Came Into Being: and on the Good*. Armstrong characterizes this treatise as 'the most intellectually and spiritually powerful of all Plotinus' ascents of the mind to God.' (*Enneads*, vol. VII, 79)

126 Bertozzi, "On Eros in Plotinus", 2012.

of the rational soul contemplating the Ideas. Now we will elaborate on this scheme in the context of the similarities and differences between the human *nous* and the divine *Nous*.

4.ii.a. The Divine Intellect's Relationship with the One

We recall from Plotinus' theogony (2.ii.b.) that the divine Intellect reproduced itself by splitting itself into individual intellects. Consequently, the human intellect had a strong affinity with the divine Intellect as its origin and model. Plotinus demonstrated this affinity in a number of ways. The first concerned how the Intellect came into existence from the One. In the first inchoate stage there was the 'desiring *Nous*' or 'unformed sight'.¹²⁷ At its conception, it desired to learn its source, thus turned (*epistrophê*) and contemplated the One. In turning to its source, the *Nous* received the properties from the One which rendered the Intellect its formation: the *Nous* realized it existed and therefore began to think. The Intellect became Being and Thought, its unformed sight turned into 'seeing'. It remained in a state of contemplation of itself and its Life principles -the intelligible world.

Hence the relationship of the Intellect to the One is echoed in the relationship of the human *nous* to the divine *Nous*: the soul desires to know its source and is attracted to it by its beauty. Accordingly it must look up to its Father. It falls in love and is filled with desire to know. It desires as well to know itself. As such, the desire for beauty and to obtain what it loves moves the human soul upwards to the higher existence. This desire is linked to the desire to know and to the appreciation of truth. Thus we can deduce Plotinus' position that the human *nous* theoretically possesses the capacity to think and reflect in somewhat the same manner as the *Nous*. The mode of thinking of the divine *Nous* is characterized by the immediacy of apprehension of itself, its eternal Ideas. Shortly, in 4.iii., we will investigate the human soul-*logos* and soul-*nous* in their activities of contemplating the Ideas and acquiring self-knowledge, which will enable us to determine to what extent the human *nous* can imitate the divine Intellect.

4.ii.b. The Divine Intellect

As was demonstrated in section 3, all images, the soul and intellect were differentiated from their sources. Yet Plotinus described the human *nous* and the divine *Nous* with paradoxical articulations. On the one hand, he stated that the *Nous* -whether it is divine or human- always remained in the noetic region. Consequently, the human *nous* did not totally belong to the lower region of the human soul. On the other hand, the *nous* that DID belong to the soul, was not truly 'ours' so to speak (V.3.3.26). It would progressively become 'ours' when we activated or actualized our intellect, in other words, became our true selves.¹²⁸ Another paradox in Plotinus' conception of the divine *Nous* entailed viewing it from the perspective of its separateness from humans.¹²⁹ The *Nous* was not inclined towards human souls, it did not reach out to them.¹³⁰ The soul was required to move -or better said-, to be moved upwards to the *Nous* by its craving to know and learn of its source.

127 This was mentioned in III.2.ii.b. and 3.iii.a.; On the desiring, loving and thinking *Nous*: e.g.: *Enn.* III.8.11.20, VI.7.35.20-28; Pigler, *Plotin, l'amour*, 89-93, 93-105; Emilsson, *Intellect*, 69-123.

128 Plotinus does not seem to designate the *nous* as 'I'. Remes, *Self*, 4-5; Rappe, *Reading Neo-Platonism*, xiii.

129 J. Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 28-32.

130 But again this is not an absolute statement of Plotinus. Elsewhere he says that the soul is yanked upwards by the Intellect. This has to do with the attraction of the beauty of the One, which the human soul first perceives in the Intellect as pure Beauty (VI.7.36.19).

By conscious effort to obtain self-knowledge the soul was also driven upwards (*Enn.* III.8.8).¹³¹ Her acquiring knowledge and judgment thereof were dependent upon the divine *Nous*. The principles (Ideas) by which the individual *nous* judged the material world were radiated from above it (V.3.3; VI.7.21). Now let us pursue these important aspects of Plotinus' epistemology in even greater detail.

The divine Intellect possesses a triad consisting of Thought, Being and Life, which manifests in its intelligible world.¹³² This triad is depicted as reflected in the human *nous*' self-knowledge (III.8.8; V.9.10.9-15). Yet there is another triad at the level of the *Nous*, which is more obviously reflected in the human intellect: *nous*, *noêsis* and *noêton*: the intellect or the thinker (the subject doing the thinking), the object of one's thought and the activity of thinking itself which altogether form a perfect unity.¹³³ This triad primarily describes the self-contemplation of the divine Intellect, the activity of it contemplating its own intelligible world, the Ideas. This results in a unity in which the Intellect is a perfect representation of the Intelligible; as such, the subject is perfectly one with its object (VI.7.36.10). Plotinus' designates this state as a consciousness of the one-and-the many *hen polla*: the *Nous*' awareness of its own multiplicity (of the intelligible world) from which its unity or oneness with itself is derived. Thought is characterized by Plotinus as a substance,¹³⁴ in the hypostasis Intellect as well as in the human intellect (III.8.8; VI.7). The relationship of Thought to Idea is never one of exteriority, which means, that the Ideas in the Intellect are exclusively inside the *Nous*, never outside of it.¹³⁵ This holds true for the ideas of the human *nous*. Accordingly, Plotinus likewise regards the Ideas of the divine Intellect which are contemplated in the human intellect as completely interior to it, in the sense that the eternal Ideas are accessible, intelligible to it by virtue of the kinship of the human intellect to the divine intellect (*Enn.* IV.7.10). Thus in the consciousness of the intellect, material images are on the other hand, essentially exterior; the Ideas, the *Nous* and the One, interior. The special functions of the human intellect are only possible or activated when focused upon the realm of the divine Intellect. Plotinus highlights the complete actualization of the intellect and its consubstantiality with the divine, by saying, for example, that the intellect will see in itself that it is immortal and that it has apprehended 'the eternal by its eternity and all the things in the intelligible world having become itself an intelligible universe full of light, illuminated by truth from the Good.' (IV.7.10.34-36).¹³⁶

131 Brachtendorf (*Struktur*, 29) mentions Beierwaltes' observation (1991) that the *Nous* does perform a certain mediating function to the human soul, joining the Soul to that which is higher to her, her highest part as separate pure *Nous* to the One. In my view, this mediating function is also present in the transcendent *Logos*, as Fattal has suggests. *Logos et Image chez Plotin*, e.g. 13.

132 Augustine mentioned this triad in *Civ. Dei* VIII.

133 Plotinus discusses the unity in *Nous* by the triad of thinking: *nous*, *noêsis*, *noêton* in VI.7.41.10, V.3.5.44; and 'Know Yourself' *gnôthi sauton* (VI.7.41.24). Augustine also makes use of this triad in *Trin.*; Another triad which Plotinus discusses concerns sight: the seer, that which is seen and sight itself (III.8.11.1-7). See Halfwassen, on the triadic nature of the *Nous* (*Plotin*, 80-84).

134 Plotinus on substances, qualities, the Platonic doctrine of categories, genera and species in *Enn.* VI.1-3 *On Kinds of Being* against the doctrine of categories of Aristotle and the Stoa.

135 See note 43 on Plotinus' borrowing of Aristotle's doctrine of *Nous* combining it with Plato's theory of Ideas, which entails a correction of Plato's *Timaeus*. There, the demiurge who made the world contemplated the Ideas which were located somewhere beyond in the transcendent world, but not in himself. Plotinus integrated the Platonic Idea World into the *Nous*, the demiurge. By equating the demiurge in *Timaeus* with the *Nous* of Aristotle, he combined the contemplation of the Ideas with his conception of the *Nous*' in its activity of thinking itself. Subsequently, contemplation of Ideas became an important element in the epistemology and the interior ascent of the human soul in actualizing its intellect.

136 Armstrong ("Earthly Beauties", 72-76) remarks that Plotinus glorified the Intelligible World, such as in: *Enn.* V.8.4.7-10; VI.7.12.22-30 and III.4.3.22. (This is in contrast to Augustine who does not glorify the Ideas as such, nor does he posit that the human soul unites with them.)

The divine *Nous* is characterized by true self-reference which does not lead to inner contradictions. Therefore it encounters in its objects, the Ideas, the same state of thinking as itself. The *Nous* sees itself as thinking in the totality of the Ideas. In this consciousness, the knower is equal to that which is known. The *Nous* does not learn; the totality of his knowing is complete and autarkic. It has everything it needs in itself (V.3.10.50-end). It has no need to search, as it is pure reality and pure Light.¹³⁷

Applied to the human soul (*logos* and *nous*), a unity of self or mind is achieved upon knowing or contemplating -not just its own ideas, but judging them at the sight of the Ideas in the *Nous*. Plotinus differentiates the ways in which activities of acquiring self-knowledge and contemplating the Ideas are carried out, namely by the two modes of thinking corresponding to the two levels of the rational soul: *dianoia*-or *dianoëtikon* and *noêsis*. We will now proceed further to the human level, to the rational soul actualizing its intellect.

4.iii. Contemplation of the Ideas and Self-Knowledge 4.iii.a. The Human Soul *Logos* Contemplating the Ideas

For the summary here on Plotinus' notion self-knowledge and the contemplation of the Ideas concerning both the *logos* and the *nous* (in subsections a. and b.), we will rely on J. Brachtendorf's study.¹³⁸ The human soul is conscious of itself being finite and that its reasoning facility is limited (V.3.1-6). It recognizes itself as an individual who desires more self-knowledge, because its sense perception does not truly satisfy the soul. It possesses insight of itself in so far that it recognizes its capacity to make the exterior things (*eidôla*, *phantasia*, *tupoi*) interior. Discursive reasoning includes the self-sufficient judgment of visual images (whether actual or mental) and the awareness that these images correspond to true Ideas. The soul also realizes its capacity for discursive thinking, as well as the existence of a power which is better than itself. Eventually it realizes its dependence on its higher, non-discursive reasoning *nous* and the *nous'* affinity with the divine *Nous* in order for it to be informed of the entire picture of reality.

The human soul-*logos* imitates the divine World-Soul-*Logos*, in that it strives for knowledge of itself and of its source. As depicted in the theogony, the divine Soul must turn to the *Nous* to obtain this knowledge. The *Nous*, as differentiated from the Soul, is located outside of her. In order to find the *Nous*, she must first turn inward to herself and search there and then search for self-knowledge. Self-knowledge in the World Soul-*Logos* is however not complete and therefore it must search

137 This is an excellent example of Plotinus' depiction of an experience of light as seen by the intellect. Note how Plotinus' description is full of paradoxes.

'This, then, is what the seeing of Intellect is like; this also sees by another light the things illuminated by that first nature, and sees the light in them; when it turns its attention to the nature of the things illuminated, it sees the light less; but if it abandons the things it sees and looks at the medium by which it sees them, it looks at light and the source of light. But since Intellect must not see this light as external, we must go back again to the eye: this will itself sometimes know a light which is not the external alien light, but it momentarily sees before the external light a light of its own, a brighter one; it either springs out from itself at night in the dark or, when the eye does not want to look at anything else, it lowers the eyelids before it and all the same sends out light, or the eye's possessor squeezes it and sees the light in it. For then, in not seeing it sees, and sees them most of all: for it sees light; but other things which it saw had the form of light but were not light. Just so, Intellect, veiling itself from other things and drawing itself inward, when it is not looking at anything will see a light, not a distinct light in something different than itself, but suddenly appearing, (LZ: this is the One) alone by itself in independent purity, so that Intellect is at a loss to know whence it has appeared, whether it has come from outside or within, and after it has gone away, will say "It was within, and yet it was not within." '(V.5.7.17-end).

138 *Struktur*, 28-32; Plotinus treats self-knowledge predominantly in *Enn.* V.3. For commentary on V.3, see W. Beierwaltes, *Selbsterkenntnis und Erfahrung der Einheit: Plotins Enneade V 3*, Text, Übersetzung, Interpretation, Erläuterungen von Werner Beierwaltes, (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1967); Rappe, *Reading Neo-Platonism*, 27-33.

further, ultimately to the divine *Nous*. In doing so, it imitates the *Nous* as its example, as when the *Nous* turned to the One at its inception.

The obtaining of self-knowledge is dependent upon one's ability to contemplate the Ideas. Thanks to the soul's discursive thinking and natural connection to its highest region, the *nous*, whose contemplative power, *noêsis*, is more efficacious, it is able to judge the sense images which have entered the soul's consciousness, using the criteria or standards (Ideas) which it sees in itself which in turn exist in the *Nous*. The human *nous* can perceive the Ideas Good or Justice or Rightness as the standards of Good and Right, because they are at its disposal. Thus it does not need to search for the eternal principles because they already exist in it itself (V.3.4.15-23). As such, the discursive region of soul, too, possesses an impression of the contents of the *Nous* (V.3.4.21-22).¹³⁹

Note here that in Brachtendorf's interpretation, the connection between the *logos* and the *nous* is explained in a satisfying manner. However, as we will note at the end of 4.iii.b, Brachtendorf does not address the various questions of Plotinus' position on the divinity of the soul or the intellect. The self-knowledge of the soul-*logos* obtained by *dianoetikon*, indeed reflects the *Nous* in that it conceives of itself, its own ideas as well as the corresponding higher Idea world. Yet it cannot do so directly in the genuine *hen polla* situation of unity as 'one-in-many' of the *Nous*.¹⁴⁰ Nor can the identification of knowing with the known, -the unity of the subject and the object of knowing- take place on this level of consciousness. Only an image of the self-referencing of the divine *Nous* can exist on the level of the *dianoetikon*, which likewise results in a weaker form of self-conception (V.3.6.25-30). The soul-*logos* realizes that it is not this Being, but that it receives its being from the *Nous* (V.3.6.23-26). Plotinus states that the human *nous* is an image of divine *Nous* because it is able to become one with the *Nous*. Yet the contemplation of the eternal Ideas begins on the level of discursive reasoning. Plotinus seems to suggest here that it is mostly carried out on this level and is thus usually incomplete.

The *nous* does possess the potential capacity to imitate the divine *Nous* in contemplating in a direct manner the whole of the intelligible world. Yet the *logos* is only able to conceive of individual Ideas in mere isolation and by abstraction, due to its multiplicity and temporal orientation.¹⁴¹ The divine *Nous* does not and cannot contain any kind of discursive thought (IV.4.1.15). The faculty of discursive thinking can therefore only grasp the *Nous* and its *hen polla* structure -or itself or anything at all for that matter- in the form of paradoxical statements. As such, material scientific knowledge can only involve a partial understanding of separate concepts and Ideas.¹⁴² This means that reference to the structure of the intelligible world in the soul-*logos* can only be expressed in separate individual statements which are connected to other individual separate statements (IV.9.5).

4.iii.b. The Human Soul-*Nous* Contemplating the Ideas¹⁴³

But since we have come to be here below again and in soul, we seek for some kind of persuasion, as if we wanted to contemplate the archetype in the image. Perhaps, then, we ought to teach our soul how Intellect contemplates itself, and to teach that part of the soul which is in some way intellectual, since we call it discursively intelligent and by this naming indicate that it is a kind of

139 As mentioned in the previous section, Emilsson discusses the difficulties of establishing the distinction between the two modes of thought here, between the *dianoia* and *noêsis-theôria* and discusses various standpoints on this matter (*Intellect*, 176-191); Blumenthal, "On Soul and Intellect", 82-104.

140 Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 15-19.

141 e.g.: IV.4.1.30-35 and V.9.8.20-end.

142 Emilsson, *Intellect*, 207-213.

143 Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 24-34.

intellect or that it has its power through and from Intellect. This therefore should know that in its own case too it comes to know what it sees and knows what it speaks. And if it was what it speaks, then it would in this way **know itself** (*ginôskoi*). **But since the things which it speaks are from above, or come to it from above**, whence it also comes itself, it could happen to it, since it is a rational principle (*logos*) and receives things akin to it and fits them akin to itself, in this way to **know** (*ginôskein*) itself. Let it then transpose the image to the true Intellect, the one [we observed] which was the same as the truths it thought which are really existent and primary,... (V.3.6.14-30)

As illustrated in the passage above, the human mind becomes conscious of itself with the help of discursive thinking, which includes its orientation to the transmitted thinking principles from above. Thus the soul-*logos*' manner of contemplation allows for an entrance into the self-conception of the *Nous*. Contemplation in the modes of the *nous-theôria* or *noêsis* merely approaches the unified self-relationship of the divine *Nous*. Hence the *nous* can be made present to oneself not only with the assistance of discursive thinking but also by obtaining a direct connection to the intuitive self-conception of the *Nous*. Instead of just 'thinking' the *Nous*, it is possible as well to see Him in us and to perceive Him (*idein kai aisthanesthai*) (V.3.4.4; 23-30). From this we can infer that non-discursive thought in the *nous* has a vision-like character (for example in III.8.11.1)¹⁴⁴ which is entirely non-propositional (as opposed to *dianoêtikon*).¹⁴⁵ The *nous* contemplates the Ideas directly and not their images. It is in fact purified of all material images (V.3.9). The full consciousness of the *nous* consists of an immediate and infallible grasp of the whole noetic sphere all at once: a full understanding of it with a clear and perfect grasp of all its relations (I.8.2).

When the soul is united with the *Nous*, or in the noetic state of mind, the *Nous* ontologically transmits to the human being its properties and sight of the divine Ideas. The individual then becomes a pure, separate *nous* of supra-individual magnitude. The soul does not think of itself anymore as an ordinary human being. Having been pulled up to the higher level, it perceives itself as the better, purer part of the soul, which is allowed to soar up to this spiritual activity, so that she may contemplate there. In this realm, the soul becomes her 'true self'.¹⁴⁶

We will conclude subsection (iii.) with a passage which summarizes the essence of Plotinus' epistemological ascent. It illustrates the contemplation of the Ideas and the divine Intellect, by the consciousness of the *logos* and then the *nous*; the two kinds of knowledge and two modes of thought.

*But as for the kinds of knowledge (epistêmê) which exist in a rational soul, those which are sense-objects- if one ought to speak of "kinds of knowledge" of these; 'opinion' is really the suitable name for them – are posterior to their objects and likenesses of them; but those which are of intelligible objects, which are certainly **the genuine kinds of knowledge (epistêmai), come from the Intellect to rational soul** and do not think any sense-object; but in so far as they are kinds of*

144 Emilsson warns that one should hesitate to apply the term 'vision' to all cases of intellection (Emilsson, *Intellect*, 191-198). Blumenthal asserts that intellection is not a 'process' but a mystical experience, (Blumenthal, "On Soul and Intellect", 95).

145 There apparently exists a debate as to whether Plotinus' non-discursive thought is primary to discursive. Emilsson argues that the contrast between discursive thought (by means of images and representations) and non-discursive thought of the things themselves (LZ: the Ideas) is analogous to the difference between knowledge obtained by reports and knowledge obtained by direct experience. Interpreted in this way, non-discursive thought is no doubt primary in the sense of being a pre-condition of discursive thought (*Intellect*, 14-15). I am convinced that Emilsson is correct. See further Emilsson, *Intellect*, Chapter 4: Discursive and Non-discursive Thought and Chapter 5.

146 e.g.: *Enn.* V.3.1 whole chapter; III.9.3, III.9.6.7-end, III.9.8.7-13.

knowledge, they are each and all of the active objects which they think, and they have from them within them the object of thought and the thought, because Intellect is within, which is the actual primary realities, and always keeps company with itself and exists in actuality and does not seek to apprehend its objects as if it did not have them or was trying to obtain them, or was going through them discursively as if they were not ready at hand before any discursive process – these are the experiences of the soul- but it stands firm in itself, being all things together...(V.9.7.1-13).
 8. If then, the thought [of Intellect] is of what is within it, that which is within it is its immanent form and this is the Idea. What then is this? Intellect and the intelligent substance; each individual Idea is not other than Intellect, but each is Intellect. And Intellect as a whole is all the Forms, and **each individual Form is an individual intellect**, as the whole body of knowledge is all its theorems, but each theorem is a part of the whole, not as being spatially distinct, but as having its particular power in the whole. This Intellect therefore is in itself and since it possesses itself in peace is everlasting fullness. (V.9.8.1-8)

Because this passage reflects the material in this section so adequately, it is a good place to stop and comment. It shows how the thinking of the human intellect reflects the self-thinking of the divine *Nous*. As Brachtendorf also correctly demonstrated, the text shows that there is a strong connection between the soul-*logos* and the soul-*nous*. The *logos* with its mode of thought receives its impressions of the Ideas transmitted from its higher part, the soul-*nous*. Additionally, the *logos* is totally dependent upon the *nous* for its knowledge. However, this text, as well as Brachtendorf's interpretation thereof, do not address the differentiation between the human and the divine Intellect. Nor does the passage above supply a satisfying transition between the two either, especially in the latter part with the claim: '*each individual Form is an individual intellect*'. Again, the confusion is complete.

Let us now return to those problems signaled in section 3. and points iv.-vi. concerning the divine character of the human intellect, in particular when it is meditating on the Ideas, to see if they can be resolved with the results of this section on the ascent and attempt to come to a satisfying solution.

4.iv. Continuation of the Discussion of the Divinity of the Intellect and the Difficulties of the Soul

In Plotinus' depiction of the rational soul, there seemed to be a gray zone between *dianoia* and *noêsis*.¹⁴⁷ As noted in the previous section, this became an urgent issue when considering how Plotinus sometimes described the intellect as undescended, not connected to the body or its immediate connection with the divine Intellect. These assertions were not reconcilable with his position on the human soul, that it was a unified whole.¹⁴⁸ The gray area there which he did not account for, entailed, for example how to pass from the one consciousness to the other, especially when the higher form of thought was seemingly a giant leap into the sea of non-representative understanding of all divine Ideas, as a result of an alleged 'complete union' with the second Hypostasis. Thus to complement Brachtendorf's summaries, we will explore further. It was noted in the previous section as well, that with some effort, it was possible to find statements in the *Enneads*

147 As regards the contemplation of the Ideas by the *logos*: see e.g.: Blumenthal, "Soul and Intellect", 82-104; and Emilsson, 176-191.

148 This would naturally clash as well with his assertion that the human being too is a whole entity; e.g: '*We must certainly too consider soul as being in body (whether it does in fact exist before it or in it) since it is from the combination of body and soul that "the complete living creature takes its name" ' (Enn. I.1.3.1-2: the title of the treatise I.1. is What is the Living Being and What is Man?)*

(which are usually utmost brief) in which Plotinus suggested the differentiation between the human *nous* and the divine *Nous*. Here is another example:

Being and Intellect are therefore one nature; so therefore are the real beings and the active actuality of being and Intellect of this kind; and the thoughts of this kind are the form and shape of being and its active actuality (LZ: he is referring to the Ideas here). But they are thought by us as one before the other because they are divided by our thinking. For the dividing intellect is a different one, but the undivided Intellect which does not divide is being and all things. (V.9.8.18-end) What then are the things in the one Intellect which we divine in our thinking? (V.9.9.1)

Here Plotinus makes a distinction between the two intellects: the dividing and the undivided. The undivided - that can only be the divine *Nous*, who, in perfect unity with its own Ideas, is of one nature, one Being and one Intellect, possessing true reality. (*N.b.* The Intellect, after it has divided itself into individual intellects or having produced a *Logos*-the Soul, does not change in nature in anyway, for example in V.1.11-17, 22-29). Plotinus refers here to the human mind as the dividing intellect, referring to its fragmented thought processes. Upon contemplating higher realities (the Ideas), its thoughts occur in a logical sequence, one after the other.¹⁴⁹ Thinking in a successive, logical or analytical manner essentially pertains to the activity of the soul-*logos* –to ordinary consciousness. Hence, this passage seems to confirm Plotinus' conception that the *nous* is therefore never truly separated from the *logos*. This would satisfy his claim of the unity of the human soul. The soul-*logos* is either oriented to its *nous* -which is always oriented to the divine- or it is oriented to the lower part of itself, which manages its physical functioning.

We recall from the previous section that Plotinus did indeed depict the attainment of the actualization of the intellect as laden with difficulties, yet these were mostly treated in a different context than that of the *nous-Nous* relationship. These will now be briefly recapitulated in order to attempt to further reconcile Plotinus' statements on the divinity of the human intellect. In section 3.vi. on 'Matter, Evil, Sin and Error' various tendencies of the human soul passed the revue which prevented her from obtaining actualization. These included forgetting her origin, poor contemplation, a false self-image and a problem with the will. All of these involved an incomplete vision of divine, transcendent reality, an exclusive orientation towards the material realm or the belief that the images of material reality were real in such a way that one mistook opinions for absolute truth. Here too, we confirmed, the difference between the experience of the most divine part of the soul and that part which makes up daily, ordinary consciousness in the physical world, was great.

Moore gives a different explanation than Brachtendorf, which also contributes somewhat to resolving the gray areas between the *logos* and the *nous*.¹⁵⁰ He states, the soul falls into error only when it 'falls in love' with the images *eidôla*, mistaking these for archetypes. When this occurs, the soul will make judgments independently of its higher part and will fall into sin (*hamartia*), that is, it

149 *Enn.* V.9.10.9-15 seems to express the sequential nature of the *nous*' mode of thought: that time and place (aspects which do not pertain to the divine) are present in the human intellect. This passage is also exceptional in that Plotinus also claims that the triad Being, Life and Thought (properties of the divine Intellect) are also present in the human intellect.

150 See E. Moore, *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, A Peer-reviewed Academic Resource*, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/plotinus/#SSH2b.i>. April 2013.

will miss the mark of right governance, which is its proper nature.¹⁵¹ Since such a fallen soul is almost a separate being (for it has ceased to fully contemplate its prior or higher part), it will be subject to the judgment of the *nous* (LZ: *Nous*?) and will be forced to endure a chain of incarnations in various bodies, until it finally remembers its true self. It will then turn its mind back to the contemplation of its higher part and return to its natural state (*Enn.* IV.8.4).¹⁵²

Moore explains further: even though Plotinus says that no soul can govern matter and remain unaffected by its contact, he assures us that the highest soul remains unaffected by the fluctuations and chaotic affections of matter, for it never ceases to productively contemplate its prior—which is to say: it never leaves its proper place. At the same time, Plotinus emphasizes that even when the soul falls, she will remain a part of the unity of the ‘we’, for despite any forgetfulness that may occur on her part, she continues to owe her existence to the presence of her higher part—the intellect.

Moore’s sharp insights in Plotinus’ psychology correctly epitomizes the paradoxical quality of Plotinus’ philosophy: in spite of the sometimes major differences in the tendencies of the three individual levels of the soul, the different selves continuously fluctuate and influence one another. In this way, too, the soul retains her unity. Yet like Brachtendorf, Moore neither addresses the fact that Plotinus also deems the intellect as divine and is able to unite in a total way with its divine model, completely unlike the *logos*.

With this in mind, we return now to Plotinus’ differentiation of the contemplation of Ideas and self-knowledge in the *logos* and the *nous*, and make an attempt at another solution, serving as a synthesis of the material covered in 3.iii.-vi. and 4.ii., iii. and iv. Considering the interdependency of the different parts of the soul, the obvious conclusion must be that all the traits of the divine *Nous* delineated above rarely occur altogether at once in the human *nous*. When speaking of the intellect, Plotinus often advocates a positive theology to the extreme, in other words, an idealistic –not a realistic one. He often describes the union with the Intellect as if it were automatic. In conjunction with his other statements on the soul, we can deduce first that humans rarely completely actualize their intellect, if at all. Furthermore, the human intellect is likely never able to glimpse the entire Thought or Intelligible World; at least not on its own volition. It is dependent on the *Nous* and must receive this vision by illumination. Were this ever to happen, I assume, then it would occur in a momentary flash which is unforgettable and would have an enormous impact on the memory, similar to the way in which Plotinus describes the union with the One (as suggested in *Enn.* V.5.7.27). Seen in this way, the divine knowledge acquired by the intellect is necessarily fragmentary. Additionally, the soul-intellect’s mode of thinking is usually discursive, alternating occasionally with experiences of an immediate and intuitive grasp likened to that of the *Nous*. For the finite human mind, *nous*, it seems

151 ‘The individual souls, certainly, have an intelligent desire consisting in the impulse to return to itself springing from the principle from which they came into being, **but they also possess a power directed to the world here below**, like a light which depends from the sun in the upper world but does not grudge its abundance to what comes after it, and they are free from sorrow if they remain with universal soul in the intelligible, but in heaven (LZ: in the realm of the *Nous*) with the universal soul **they can share in its government** like those who live with a universal monarch share in the government of his empire...’ IV.8.4.1-12. The rest of this book has to do with the descent. This treatise is entitled *On the Descent of the Soul*.

152 ‘But if it (LZ: the soul) comes out of the intelligible world and cannot endure unity, but embraces its own individuality and wants to be different and so to speak puts its head outside, it thereupon acquires memory. Its memory of what is in the intelligible world still holds it back from falling, but its **memory** of the things here below carries it down here; its memory of what is in heaven keeps it there and in general it is and becomes what it remembers. For remembering is either thinking or imagined; and the image (*phantasia*) comes to the soul not by possession, but as it sees, so it is disposed; and if it sees sense-objects, it sinks low in proportion to the amount of them it sees. **For because it possesses all things in a secondary way, and not so perfectly [as Intellect], it becomes all things, and since it is a thing belonging to the frontier between the worlds** (LZ: between the sensible and the noetic or divine worlds), **and occupies a corresponding position, it moves in both directions.**’ IV.4.3. See also IV.4.1-2.

nearly impossible to develop perfect, independent, self-referential and complete self-knowledge. Only the *Nous* possesses this, because only in the *Nous*, totality and autarky exist.¹⁵³ For the human intellect, only a *participation* in the self-relationship of the infinite *Nous* is attainable, which is neither total.

The question now arises, if the intellect can participate in the self-relationship or self-referentiality of the divine Intellect, what happens to the soul's 'historical self' once it has become intellect, its true self? Does it discard momentarily that which makes a human a human: its individuality, as a finite being endowed with mind? Does it involve putting off its 'self-consciousness' or just its egotistic tendencies which lead to sin and illusion –in becoming a 'we'? We will not attempt to unravel the questions on the self in this study; there are many scholarly discussions on this topic.¹⁵⁴ Suffice it to say, that it is altogether likely that Plotinus intended the 'actualization of one's true self' as a perception only experienced in intense momentary glimpses.

To conclude this section, we will recapitulate briefly the clarifications provided here in order to understand Plotinus' psychology properly and do so in terms of his depiction of the imaging process (as was conjectured in section 3.vi.a.). The human intellect, as image of Intellect, is always inferior to its model. Accordingly, it should be understood as of lesser substance than its source. The human soul cannot perfectly duplicate the activity of its divine model. If this goal were ever to be attained, the human soul would intensify its experience of the divine and identify itself with it. Yet this would not mean that it would truly become the divine *Nous*. It will become-not a god but 'god-like'. As regards the relationship of the *logos* to the *nous*: given the *logos* is an image of its *nous*, the axiom of imaging mentioned above will likewise dictate that the *logos* -as well as its thinking activities- are of lesser substance than the intellect itself and its activities.

Actually, one could question why there must be a distinction between these two modes of thought. In practice, the *logos* is dealing with itself, its own thoughts in the mode of discursive thinking; in *noêsis*, it is oriented to higher thoughts of the intelligible world. The distinction should not be severe, as this would entail a severance in the soul, which Plotinus also attempts to avoid. His doctrine of imaging dictates that all souls are one and even the individual soul, imaging the transcendent Soul, possesses a unity (even in its multiplicity). Thus we must conclude, that the soul-*logos*, just as the transcendent *Logos* in the Godhead, which always has an immediate contact with the transcendent *Nous*, is always capable of being in contact with its own *nous*. This is not just its potential, it is its privilege. Its adherence to the material temporal world will hinder the actualization of the intellect because the material world generally consists of an illusory, confusing reality. The good will of the soul, that is, its desire for ultimate Good and orientation to God, will always provide advancement (VI.8.3-4).

We must not lose sight of why this issue originally became of importance. For some reason, Augustine did not criticize Plotinus in his appraisal of Platonism in *Conf.* and *Civ. Dei* for his position on the divinity of the soul. This would seem highly appropriate, considering his harsh criticism of the

153 Another obvious difference between the human and the divine Intellect is that the *nous* is not world-creative (!). However, Plotinus comments that when living things produce (not necessarily in the sense of physical reproduction), they are, like the divine, creative by contemplation and fill all things with rational principles and contemplation (III.8.7.19-23). I interpret this in the following way: Plotinus is emphasizing here the fertility of intellectual contemplation as a transformation of the contents of the mind into truth. Plotinus also urges to sculpt oneself in order to purify and beautify oneself (II.9 and I.6). Cf: Remes, *Self*, 179-212.

154 Brachtendorf (*Struktur*, 32-33). C. Horn gives a positive interpretation to the conception of *Nous* in which individuality is associated from *Enn.* V.8.11: "Selbstbezüglichkeit des Geistes bei Plotin und Augustin", in: Brachtendorf (*Gott, Bild* 2000), 81-103, note 81; Remes, *Self*, 239-257; O'Daly, *Plotinus Self*.

Manichaeans and of others who likewise embraced such a tenet. Could the reason why Augustine refrained to criticize Plotinus on this point be that he had studied Plotinus' philosophy so well that he was sensitive to the doctrinal inconsistencies and also understood that Plotinus' psychology actually neutralized his statements that the soul or intellect was divine? This inquiry will be elaborated much further in various sections in Chapter VI, once we have assimilated all the material of this study.

Finally, I must concede with Blumenthal (and not Armstrong)¹⁵⁵ that Plotinus' doctrines of soul and intellect do indeed contain numerous inconsistencies and paradoxes. In my opinion, they were generally caused by Plotinus' incongruent statements on the divinity of the soul-intellect. These can indeed be explained and justified, as we have done here, yet not without spilling much ink. Another point must be underlined here: the authors utilized in these expositions on Plotinus' teachings of soul and intellect (Brachtendorf, Blumenthal, Emilsson, Moore, and Atkins¹⁵⁶) neglected to include in their studies how the process of imaging played an instrumental role in these issues, as I have shown here, which results in a more complete view as to how Plotinus viewed the relationship of the soul-intellect to her *logos*.

Now to underline this more realistic picture of the human intellect and Plotinus' paradoxical concepts, we should recall one of the traits of the intellect which potentially leads to sin mentioned in section three: audacity or self-assertion, *tolma*. This was an act initiated by the *Nous* at the time of its coming into existence from the One, which essentially entailed a descent and turning away from one's origin. The human intellect certainly inherited this tendency: to fall back into the normal consciousness after glimpsing the intelligible world and later believing himself to be an independent, self-sufficient being. Yet there is still another sin or disability which the *Nous* has left to posterity: the frustration of overcoming and surpassing one's own thought world in order to fully see the One. This topic will serve as a prelude to the following section on love, desire and the union with the One.

4.iv.a The 'Failure' and 'Descent' of the Intellect

C. Tornau articulates certain important points concerning Plotinus' depiction of the divine Intellect which should be kept in mind in the upcoming section on the union of the One. He points out that in *Enn.* V.4.2, the divine Intellect is depicted as achieving an intellection of the One by allowing itself to be formed by the One.¹⁵⁷ But in a later treatise (III.8.8.30-end and III.8.11.23), as in most of Plotinus' mature accounts of the relation of Intellect to One, Plotinus stresses the constitution of the *Nous*' unity at its formation -as in the 'in-plurality' of the intelligible Forms. According to Tornau, Plotinus implies in this condition a failure to see the One.¹⁵⁸ The inchoate, potential Intellect ('sight not yet seeing') becomes actual intellectual vision, not by seeing the One, but by seeing something else instead: the intelligible world which is none other than itself. Tornau argues that this is the point behind Plotinus' talk about wishing, desiring and 'looking at' by the *Nous* in the cited passages. Intellect is Intellect precisely because there exists within itself a desire to see its source which remains

155 See note 101.

156 H.J. Blumenthal, *Plotinus' Psychology*, 1-7, *ibid*; "On Soul and Intellect", 82-104, 83, 92; Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 27-32; S.R.L. Clark, "Plotinus: Body and Soul" *CCP* (1999), 282-288; M. Atkins, *Plotinus Enneads V.1*, 42, 62-64; Emilsson, *Intellect*, 176-191.

157 C. Tornau, "The Background of Augustine's Triadic Epistemology in *De Trinitate* 11-15, A Suggestion" in: E. Berron and G. O'Daly, (eds.) *Le De Trinitate de Saint Augustin exégèse, logique et noétique* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2012), 251-266, 261.

158 See also on the same topic: Emilsson, *Intellect*, 73; Armstrong comments on this failure: '*Intellect only constitutes itself as Intellect because it eternally falls short in its endeavor to reach the One and therefore is perpetually in need of and perpetually desires the One.*' (In reference to: *kai ephimenos aei kai aei tugchanôn*: III.8.11.23-24) [*Enneads*, vol. V (at V.3.11.15) 110].

inevitably unfulfilled. In other words, at the actualization of the Intellect as Thought, Being and Life, there arises an obstacle in the *Nous*' connection to the One caused by its *tolma*. It is unable to unite with the One because the One is beyond all Being and Thought, which is totally beyond itself. The condition produces an eternally ungratified desire.

A passage which supports Tornau's observations is the following: '*...but before this, it (LZ: Intellect) is only desire and unformed sight. So this Intellect had an immediate apprehension of the One, but by grasping it, it became Intellect, perpetually in need (LZ: of the One).*' (V.3.11.13-14). It appears that Plotinus again slipped out of consistency here: as elsewhere he posited that the *Nous* was entirely without need.¹⁵⁹ Scattered throughout the *Enneads*, we can find other short statements or subtle nuanced passages which suggest the weaknesses of the Intellect.¹⁶⁰

Tornau's observation helps to illuminate an utmost relevant aspect regarding Plotinus' depiction of the relationship of the *Nous* to the One. Parallel to Plotinus' descriptions of the difficulties of the soul which neutralize his position of the divine human intellect, this insight shows that Plotinus also neutralizes his many accounts of the ascent to the One which have the same 'unproblematic character' as his accounts of the human intellect ascending to the *Nous*. That is, in other contexts in the *Enneads*, Plotinus admits that the ascent requires overcoming almost unsurmountable difficulties. We will now close this discussion on the subject of the divinity of the intellect, yet it will return again in the discussions related to similar concepts in Augustine's doctrine in Chapter VI.3.iii.f. and VI.5.v.b.

In this section we have dealt with Plotinus' account of the ascent to the Intellect by means of acquiring certain kinds of knowledge. Yet other aspects are involved in the epistemological ascent as well, such as the attraction of beauty, desire and love: '*First the soul will come in its ascent to intellect and there, will know the Forms, all beautiful and will affirm that these, the Ideas, are beauty; for all things are beautiful by these, by the products of intellect and essence...*' (Enn. I.6.9.34-37). At this note, we move on to the next section, which deals with Plotinus' doctrine of *Erôs* and how one through the force of love and desire is elevated from the *Nous* to the One.

4.v. To the One: the Ascent by Beauty and Love¹⁶¹

4.v.a. Introduction

Plotinus identifies the ultimate source of Love with the first Hypostasis, the One and the Good. In doing so, he applies a triad of love to the One: '*And he (LZ: the One) that same self, is lovable and love and love of himself in that he is beautiful and from himself and in himself.*' VI.8.15.1-5.¹⁶² *Erôs*,

159 Plotinus seemed to suggest that true love-love in intellect- was not an appetitive love and thus has no need, e.g. *Enn.* VI.9.9.44-50, V.3.10.50-end; Rist, *Eros and Psyche*, 76-86, 183.

160 Examples: the unfulfilled desire of the *Nous*: (VI.7.32.27-30 or VI.7.33.27-30); the experience of the One is so intense that the soul desires to love even beyond the One, if that were possible (VI.7.22.20); love has a defective nature: due to its lack of definition and limits (of which one is unconscious) by its lack of satisfaction (III.5.7.7-26); difficulties in seeing the One: V.5.10.

161 Literature employed in this section: Hadot, *Plotin simplicité*, 71-108; A.H. Armstrong, "Chapter 15. The One and the Intellect", 236-249; Rist, *Eros and Psyche*; *ibid*, "Love and Will around *De Trinitate* XV 20 38" in Brachtendorf, *Gott Bild*, 205-218; *ibid*, *Augustine Deformed, Love, Sin and Freedom in the Western Moral Tradition*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2014); Pigler, *Plotin l'amour*.

162 '*Kai erasmion kai erôs ho autos kai hautou erôs, hate ouk allôs kalos ê par'autou kai en autôi.*' Pigler comments that this quote represents an exceptional affirmative discourse by Plotinus concerning the One (*Plotin, l'amour*, 27). Note the activity of self-love in the One: here the subject and object are one; which is characteristic of the *Nous* as we saw in the context of knowledge (See section 4.ii.b.). The One is also the origin of all Beauty, Grace, Love and Light. This triad is discussed in Rist, *Eros and Psyche*, 105-107; Pigler, *Plotin, l'amour*, 27-36; C. Tornau, "Does Love Make Us Beautiful? A criticism of Plotinus in Augustine's Tractates on the first Epistle of John" in: *Millennium* 4 (1), 93-105, 97; *ibid*, "Eros versus Agape? Von Plotins Eros zum Liebesbegriff Augustins" in: *Philosophisches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft* 112 (2005), 271-291, 279-280; F.M. Schroeder, *Form and Transformation, A study in the philosophy of Plotinus*, (Montreal, Kingston: Queen's University Press, 1992), 105-107.

indeed ultimately derives from the One, yet Plotinus explains, this love is described better as not being the One itself (as the One has no predicates: *Enn.* VI.7.38) but rather as the experience of the One, as by the *Nous* (or *nous*) when turned to the One. As depicted in the section on ascent by knowledge, the *Nous* became what it is by longing to know its source and prior to this turning, it was the loving or desiring Intellect.¹⁶³ Subsequently *Nous* became the Thinking Intellect. Thus the human ascent to the One involves the same activities as the *Nous* becoming what it is, starting from the self-awareness of being attuned to pure Thought to becoming total desire and love. Thus Plotinus' notion of love can be defined as the force of attraction originating from the One, radiated to the realms under it which serves as an impulse for the human mind to return to the One. Although we are dealing here primarily with the term *Erôs*, Plotinus uses other synonyms as well which are translated to English as love and basically have the same signification, such as *philia* and *agapê*.¹⁶⁴

Plotinus describes *Erôs* in three main treatises in the *Enneads*.¹⁶⁵ The main treatise which will be mostly used for this exposition is VI.7, which will also be used often in Chapter VI in the comparison with Augustine's exposition of love in *Trin.* VIII-X. The treatises on *Erôs* depict how the forces of longing for and loving beauty impel the consciousness to rise from the human sense level and ultimately to an experience of love with the One. The ascent is also depicted as becoming the image (*eikôn*-often denoted by 'trace' *ichnos*)¹⁶⁶ as the soul progressively gains resemblance to that what is above it: the Intellect and the One, in the actualization of the 'true self'. This exposition will begin with Plotinus' descriptions of the force of love as desire; first on the human level which elevates upwards to the perception of the Forms in the Intellect and then to the experience of love in the One.

4.v.b. *Erôs* is Desire

'The individual souls certainly have an intelligent desire consisting in the impulse to return to itself springing from the principle from which they came into being...' (*Enn.* IV.8.4.1).¹⁶⁷ For Plotinus, love

163 On the desiring, loving and thinking *Nous*: e.g.: *Enn.* III.8.11.20, VI.7.35.20-28, Treated already in section 4.ii.

164 e.g.: *philia* (< *ephesei*) VI.7.14.20; *agapê* (e.g. < *agapêsas*, *agapêtaton*) VI.8.15 and 16.12-14; See Rist, *Eros, Psyche*, 183, 76-86. The *agapê* referred to here is a veritable *erôs* (Pigler, *Plotin l'amour*, 28). *Lexicon Plotinianum*, on *Erôs*: 430-431.

165 III.5 *On Eros the God of Love*; VI.7: *The Forms and The Good* and in VI.5: *The Presence of Being Everywhere* chapter 10. In the treatise III.5 *On Eros the God of Love*, Plotinus interprets the birth of the god *Eros* from Plato's *Symposium* (brought forth by the intercourse of Poverty and Plenty). Plotinus reconciles Plato's works *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium* by distinguishing the Love who is a god from the love who is a *daimôn* and from the love which is an affection of the soul. What is useful for us here is *Erôs* as link between the soul and the divine (III.5.2). In that sense, *Erôs* is the medium between the subject who desires and the desired object. It is not compared to the person desiring, but to the eye through which the desirer sees the object desired.

Other important passages are VI.5.10; VI.7.14.22, 30-32; and VI.9.9-10. In treatise VI.5.10, love is described as desire for the totality of the One. The treatise VI.7 also contains much information on the notion of *Erôs*, desire for the ascent to the One, loving the Forms, the Intellect, Beauty and Good; as well as on ecstasy. In the treatise VI.9 *On the Good or the One*, chapters 9-10, Plotinus describes love for the divine, the One, leaving all behind and a process of seeing oneself, the true self and becoming one with the One.

166 VI.7.9-10 and 17; VI.7.18.1-5.

167 See also III.5; I.6. The term *erôs* is thus synonymous with the terms he uses to express 'desire' such as *epheisis*, *pothos*, *opeXis*, *hormê*. R. Arnou, *Le désir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin: contribution à l'histoire des idées religieuses aux premiers siècles de l'ère chrétienne*, (Paris: Alcan, 1923), 53-66. Plotinus' usage of these terms shows differences, but the differences are nuanced and sometimes negligible. Arnou explains these in more detail.

begins with desire to unite with something which is beautiful.¹⁶⁸ Plotinus believes that all things express desire and that all desire is desire for the Good, or for what is the better: *'the birth pangs of longing bear witness that there is some good for each.'* (VI.7.26.10). Plotinus describes many kinds of desire which entail different kinds of love: for example, that which the soul directs to the opposite direction of the Good and Beautiful which consequently, by definition, is ugly and bad (VI.7.27-28). At the opposite spectrum of Good, matter, he accentuates, exists the neediest of all; it seeks goodness in form because the archetypal Form is what makes something lovable (VI.7.33.35). There is a desire or love which tends to ascend yet it is mixed, for example with sense perception, or with passion (*pathos*) or a sickness of the soul; or mixed with the love which was invoked by a demon. Then there is the love which is God which is purely unphysical (III.5.7). The division between these desires is contingent on the appetite for the sensible and the appetite for the reasonable.¹⁶⁹ Plotinus depicts soul's love as a kind of radical incompleteness, a permanent incapacity to be satisfied, due to the 'material' element in it.¹⁷⁰ Yet Plotinus also says that love always has a need for something greater and beyond (VI.7.22). *'And as long as there is anything higher than that which is present to it, it naturally goes on upwards, lifted by the giver of its love.'* (VI.7.22.20).¹⁷¹ Armstrong explains here that *'Erôs is not just a desire which disappears with satisfaction but something which persists when the lover attains full fruition and union with the beloved.'*¹⁷²

4.v.c. *Erôs* Human Love on the Physical Level

Plotinus teaches that love is light and that the soul is awakened by the light in beauty.¹⁷³ The light which a person can perceive on the sense level at the beginning of the ascent, is a weak light, merely the outset of the love of the immense light. If we love, it is because something in the object seems indefinable which surpasses its physical beauty that attracts us. Plotinus describes this something

168 *'Now about the affection of soul for which we make love responsible, there is no one, I suppose, who does not know that it occurs in souls which desire to embrace some beauty and this desire has two forms: one which comes from the chaste who are akin to absolute beauty and one which wants to find fulfillment in the doing of some ugly act. And if someone assumed that the origin of love was the longing for beauty itself which was there in men's souls, and their recognition of it and kinship with it and unreasoned awareness that it is something of their own, he would hit, I think, on the truth about its cause. For the ugly is opposed to nature and to God.'* (III.5.1.9-19).

169 *Epithumia* is a kind of love grounded in the body (e.g.: IV.8.2, IV.4.20). *Boulêsis* is a desire for the Good, the desire for things reasonable, immaterial, spiritual (e.g. VI.8.6). See Arnou, *Le désir*, 57-58. Desire acts as an intermediary as well (VI.2.21, VI.8.18). Rist describes how *Eros* is 'non-appetitive, but creative of being.' (*Eros and Psyche*, 76-86, 183).

170 III.5.7.4-17. See Armstrong (*Enneads*, vol. III, 190-191) concerning this remarkable passage. Plotinus' is interpreting Plato's story of Poverty and Plenty who bring forth the god *Eros*. Poverty represents intelligible matter, Plenty, intelligible reality: *'Poverty had intercourse with an intelligible nature, not merely with an image of the intelligible or an imagination derived from it, but she was there in the intelligible and united with it and bore the substance of Love made from form and indefiniteness, the indefiniteness which the soul had before it attained the God, while it was divining that there was something there by an indefinite, unlimited imagination. Therefore, since a rational principle came to be in something which was not rational, but an indefinite impulse and an obscure expression, what it produced was something not complete or sufficient, but defective, since it came into being from an indefinite impulse and a sufficient rational principle. So Love is not a pure rational principle, since he has in himself an indefinite, irrational, unbounded impulse; for he will never be satisfied as long as he has in him the nature of the indefinite.'*

171 Armstrong comments that this passage is the clearest statement made by Plotinus that our desire to return to the Good is given by the Good (*Enneads*, vol. VII, 157). The context here is that human desire for love is so strong that it not only longs to encounter the One but even wishes to progress further, if that were possible (III.5.4.25).

172 Armstrong, *Enneads*, vol. III, 182.

173 VI.7.22, 26-end; V.3.17.15-40. On Plotinus' experiences of the ascent to Light, see notes 137 and 187.

as *Erôs*, as a life, a brilliance or grace¹⁷⁴ which makes itself desirable and without which, beauty would be cold and inert (VI.7.22 and 24). Thus love experienced on the physical sense level already encompasses a presentiment of infinity of that which surpasses all Form and Thought.¹⁷⁵ If one were aware, Plotinus says, that the object of one's love is truly that which is without form, one would directly desire the highest principle, the Good. Love is of a substantial (*ousias*) nature (III.5.3-4), existing in the Godhead¹⁷⁶ and in the individual soul as well.

The experience of Plotinus' *Erôs* also begins on the level of human love or what two lovers experience, which is to some extent analogous to love for the divine.¹⁷⁷ Yet, being captivated by the physical beauty of a person -the form in sense objects *tupos*- is not the fullest kind of love which can be realized.¹⁷⁸ Plotinus asks, why are we then taken by this kind of love? If an object is simply beautiful, is beauty not enough to explain love? (*Enn.* VI.7.33.22). No, because on a higher level of consciousness, one desires to see the object loved in the vision of the Form. Thus after departing from the sense impressions, the soul should visualize the universal, beautiful and incorporeal Form of what it desires. The soul should focus on the non-corporeal form of love and '*seek to see the beloved that he may water him when withering*' (VI.7.33.26). Hence, in order to intensify the experience of full Love, the human soul must pursue the cultivation of its highest part *nous* and exercise the characteristics of this region, such as the intuitive, immediate grasping of the Forms and truth. In this way, *Erôs*, as a divine force, drives human desire upwards to experience divine love. *Erôs* moves the lover beyond human love because human love is merely an image of true love (VI.9.9.39-47) -a reflection of true love which the Good infuses into the soul. When the One appears, human love will disappear.

4.v.d. *Erôs* Rising to the Level of the Intellect and the Forms

Erôs urges the soul to desire to see the Forms more purely so that one's love becomes not only intensified but truer. In effect, the soul's initial desiring of physical beauty will lead to the longing for the divine Intellect and the contemplation of its Ideas.

When anyone, therefore, sees this light, then truly he is also moved to the Forms and longs for the light which plays upon them and delights in it, just as with the bodies here below, our desire

174 On the Greek term: *charis* ('grace or charm'): the beauty of a facade perceived through the senses is not the result of attractiveness of the thing in itself (as in its symmetry or colors) but rather because of the *charis*. This is communicated by the One-Good (throughout VI.7) (Hadot, *Simplicité*, 76-79). The Greek term *charis* has nothing to do with Augustine's term 'grace' or the Christian term *caritas*.

175 Hadot, *Simplicité*, 75.

176 '*But if what keeps company (LZ: the subject) is one with what it keeps company with (LZ: the object) and what is (LZ: Being), in a way, desiring is one with the object of desire, and the object of desire is on the side of existence and a kind of substrate (hypostaton), again it has become apparent to us that the desire and the substance (ousia) are the same.*' VI.8.15.5-10. This passage is useful for demonstrating Plotinus' position that love is a substance. It seems here that he is identifying the One with Being and Substance; yet Being and Substance as well as the unity of the subject with its object are characteristics more appropriate for the Intellect. In other passages in VI.8., such as in the following chapter, Plotinus assures us that the One is beyond Substance and Intellect. In this book he is intricately describing the dependent relationship of the intellect to the One, where it sometimes seems that the borders between two become vague.

177 VI.7.34.5-16; IV.4.2.27-28; VI.9.9.39.

178 See also I.3 *On Dialectic*, Plotinus' interpretation of Plato's theory of dialectic from *Phaedrus* and *Symposium* (which contains some alterations). Here Plotinus describes three types of human beings in the context of love. The third type advocates the philosophic ideal: philosophers do not need to pass through the intermediary of human love. The philosopher needs only to be guided by sciences and virtues via dialectic to the ascent to the One. However, III.5 does in fact deal more with personal love for other persons than in other treatises.

*is not for the underlying material things but for the beauty imaged upon them. For each is what it is by itself; but it becomes desirable when the Good colours it, giving a kind of grace to them and passionate love (erôs) to the desirers. Then the soul, receiving into itself an outflow from thence, is moved and dances wildly and is all stung with longing and becomes love.*¹⁷⁹ (VI.7.22.1-10)

The spectacle of divine Love and Beauty which exists in the world of Forms attracts the soul with their shimmering and awesome grace *charis* (VI.7.22.21) derived from the One. This inexplicable attraction of beauty is bound to Life, as in the true Life and Being of the Intelligible World. In the consciousness of the intellect, the soul enflames with love and the birth of true love takes place. *'For there in the realm of the Intellect is true delight and the greatest satisfaction, the most loved and longed for, which is not in the process of becoming or movement, but its cause is what colours and shines upon and glorifies the intelligibles.'* (VI.7.30.30-32). The divine Intellect is attractive to the human soul on account of its close proximity to the Good (which the Intellect images), and because of its awe-inspiring Beauty and Love. Plotinus asserts that longings are what initially conceive thinking (V.6.5). One longs for knowledge because one longs to contemplate the vision of God more fully and because contemplation in itself is the goal (III.8.5-7). As is evident here, the experience of love in the Intellect and the contemplation of Ideas described here differs considerably from Plotinus' descriptions of the ascent in the context of his epistemology and serene intellectual contemplation.

The experience of love in the realm of the *Nous* is a foreshadowing of the soul's *unio mystica* with the One. Its experience in Intellect is a reflection of the *Nous* when it came into being from the One. In its pre-intellectual, indistinct and undetermined phase, it desired to know its source. By turning to the One, the *Nous* was touched by the One and became drunk -as with nectar- with love and joy in this immediate contact (VI.7.35.24-25). In falling in love, the *Nous* went out of its mind as it were, carried off, lifted passively by the One (*Enn.* VI.7.36.15-20, 19).¹⁸⁰ In the second phase -in the unfolding of the *Nous*- the Intellect became aware of itself, of its multiplicity and totality of the Forms. From that moment on, the *Nous* could only know the One in no other way than through an intellectual experience, in the duality of object and subject, in the multiplicity of Forms. Recall from the previous section the descent of the *Nous* at its inception and its 'failure' to reach the One. Yet in the state of loving the One, it knew that it still had its thinking, yet it was also aware that it was not thinking now (VI.7.35.30). In a parallel manner, Plotinus depicted the human intellect as understanding itself as an image or trace of the *Nous*, imitating the Intellect's amorous and ecstatic contemplation of the One (the Loving Intellect), while at the same time fascinated by the divine Life and Thought in itself (the Thinking Intellect).

4.v.e. Erôs Beyond the Intellect

Erôs, as a dynamic movement which desires union with the perceived beauty, is eventually not truly gratified at the level of Intellect.¹⁸¹ The soul is primarily moved unconsciously by love for the Good

179 VI.7.22.1-22.

180 Augustine's notion of *visio intellectualis*, which forms an important complement to his depiction of the *imago Trinitatis*, also involves ecstasy. It is comparable here because it is incurred by God (*Gen. litt* XII; Chapter IV.4.iii.). Yet Augustine does not express it as a 'falling in love' with God, here depicted by Plotinus as sheer intoxication.

181 Pigler's correctly comments that '*Dans la métaphysique de Plotin, l'amour est donc toujours supérieur à la pensée. Comme l'Un lui-même est hypernoësis.*' (Plotin, *l'amour*, 198).

(VI.7.15-25).¹⁸² If the Beauty of the thinking Intellect and of the Form filled the human intellect with love, it realizes that it was due to the fact that this Beauty resembled the first principle, the Good (VI.7.15.9).

But when a kind of warmth from thence (LZ: the divine Intellect) comes upon it, it gains strength and wakes and is truly winged; and though it is moved by passion for the which lies close by it, yet all the same it rises higher, to something greater which it seems to remember. And as long as there is anything higher than that which is present to it, it naturally goes on upwards, lifted by the giver of its love (LZ: the One, the Good). It rises above the Intellect, but cannot run on above the Good, for there is nothing above it. (VI.7.22 15-22)

Progressively the soul increases in likeness (*homoiotêta*) of the divine, first of the Intellect, then of the One. Plotinus says that a person can prepare himself for receiving the One and the truest love by resembling the One: making oneself as inwardly beautiful as possible. In doing so, one temporarily discards not only the earthly, historical self but essentially the entire region of the rational soul: all discourse and intellectual vision. This is naturally the most difficult part: disposing of the two most important human 'selves', including what had been the 'true, immaterial self'.

Plotinus describes the soul united with Intellect, desiring infinite love and experiencing the One as 'suddenly appearing'.¹⁸³ Armstrong makes an interesting comment pertaining to this: '*The suddenness and unexpectedness of the final vision is an important feature of Plotinus' descriptions. It is not something one can plan for and bring about when one wishes.*'¹⁸⁴ In complete union with the One, there is nothing between the soul and the One, they are both one, no longer two. Two lovers in the world below imitate this in their will and desire to be united at the ecstasy¹⁸⁵ of their consummation (VI.7.31).¹⁸⁶ The One's amorous ecstasy with *Nous* is what the *Nous* instilled in the human soul: which effectuated the birth of love in the soul. When love is born in the soul, it will always desire to return to its absolute origin. In the One, the soul attains the final experience of true reality -the soul becomes most 'real'- truer than it was in the *Nous*, the self of an ultra-transcendent and infinite nature.¹⁸⁷ The One itself is beyond Thought, Self-thinking and Substance. The human experience

182 Unconscious love for the Good is suggested in VI.7.31.20, 30-35. Armstrong remarks on the latter (*Enneads*, vol.VII, 183): '*Here, as in V.5.12, the unperceived presence and unconscious love of the Good are prior to the conscious recollection of the beauty of the World of Forms aroused by the beauties here.*'

183 Plotinus is not entirely consistent in his portrayal of how the soul encounters the One. '*He (LZ: the One) does not look to them but they to him, but he is, if we may say so, born to his own interior, as it were well pleased (agapêsas) with himself, the pure radiance being himself, this with which he is well pleased. But this means that he gives himself existence, supposing him to be an abiding active actuality and the most pleasing of things in a way rather like Intellect.*' VI.8.16.12-14. Plotinus does speak of the One coming to the soul in V.5.8. and V.3.17. See Armstrong, "III. Was Plotinus a Magician?" *Plotinus and Christian Philosophy*, 73-79.

184 *Enneads*, vol. V, 135: note referring to VI.7.36.18-19.

185 The union with the One is described only once as an experience of *ekstasis* in *Enn.* VI.9.10. Armstrong's insight is indispensable here: he comments that describing the mystical union according to Plotinus as 'ecstasy' gives a misleading impression of this otherwise quiet, austere mysticism (*Enneads*, vol. VII, 342-343)

186 See also IV.4.2.27-28.

187 This experience is also depicted as an experience of Light (V.5.7.33). Hadot explains Plotinus' view that all vision is light and light is vision -there is no difference in this respect to inner or outer light. The mystical experience is nothing but light-and not effectuated by one's own force (VI.7.36.17; V.3.17.28). The goal for the soul is to touch this light: to see this light by this light, not through a light from someone or somewhere else, but the light which illuminates oneself. How this can be realized? Discard everything! (Hadot, *Simplicité*, 104-106).

of the One is, like that of the *Nous*, only momentary¹⁸⁸ and not a definite unification (VI.7.34-35). It results in better judgment of reality and truth, becoming conscious of what one truly desires, of one's love for God and the importance of selflessness. Plotinus describes an aftermath of the ascent to the One: the descent: as an experience of contempt for the Intellect and Forms, everything which was once marveled at is now despised as being inferior. Subsequently the soul becomes again what it had been before; distinguished from the moments of when it was blissful (VI.7.35). Plotinus does not envision limits on desire and love -even at the One, he says, the soul wishes to drive forward and expand further. There may be two degrees in Plotinus' account of the transcendent mystic experience, that on the level of the *Nous* and that of the One. Yet there is only one movement, the movement to the One, from which perspective, Plotinus asserts, the soul should view all reality.

4.vi. Synthesis of Plotinus' Account of the Ascent: Love and Knowledge

Behind all desires and loves is the singular love for the Good, the desire to ascend to the Good and experience the unification with the ultimate principle. In order to come to the One, one must first go through the rational soul, discursive thinking and then to the intellect. The soul longs to completely actualize itself as intellect *nous* and therefore, it loves knowledge, in particular, true knowledge (VI.7). True knowledge and true love are beyond discursive reasoning and acquired by a gradual process of contemplating the Ideas in the divine *Nous*, acquiring a fuller insight into the intelligible world. In a more profound sense, by means of a continuous purification of all things material in the soul, it fulfills its longings to become one with the divine Intellect. Yet it knows instinctively or unconsciously that beyond Intellect, there is something more which is indescribable and incomprehensible to the human mind, the One, which is singular and far from the world of multiplicity. It is not enough to know that these two divine realms exist, the point is to raise one's consciousness to these levels and experience in oneself two different tones of spiritual life (*Nous* and *One*). *Erôs* is thus a divine impetus which drives one to seek knowledge, but also that which takes the thinking mind beyond itself-from the *Nous*' self-orientation towards the Intellect's yearning to return to the One. The ultimate experience of the One entails a momentary experience of intense emotion and a temporary loss of self. The soul's innate desire to experience the love and beauty of the One will ultimately cause the love and knowledge it does attain on lower levels, to never be truly gratifying.

The rational soul and intellect is aware of its differentiation from the true Self of the divine *Nous*. Its contemplation of its own ideas cannot measure up to that of the *Nous* and as such, it does not encompass an immediate or complete attainment of perfection. Plotinus' doctrine of the intellect regarding the divinity of the soul as well as its destiny to ultimately unite to its source, to the One, is full of paradoxes. The reader begins to wonder at his idealistic accounts of an essentially -at least for the present- unattainable ascent. All in all, Plotinus believes firmly in the possibility of encountering true divinity in the form of Light, Beauty and Love within the soul. He posits that this only occurs by actualizing the intellect. The divine Intellect makes this actualization possible by pulling the soul upwards, who consciously and willingly desires it and makes efforts to purify herself. The One pulls the (fortunate) intellect further upwards in a kind of flash experience of ultimate, indescribable reality.

188 Suggested in V.5.7.24. See Fattal, *Plotin chez Augustine*, 67-75 on the instantaneous nature of both Augustine's and Plotinus' depictions of the ascent. Scholarly opinions vary as to whether Plotinus intended to advocate the dissolving (destroying) the self completely. Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 15-19. See note 97 for resources on Plotinus' notion of self. Remes gives a nuanced view on this in *Self*, "Losing the Limits of the Self", 239-257. Remes' comments are correct, I believe, when she says that the experience of the Intellect and the One essentially entails a kind of gradual rebirth of the human being. Uniting to the One occurs rarely yet its effects would incur a drastic transformation of perspective.

Plotinus informs us that this is an account of a personal experience which is difficult to put into words (VI.9.11). Taking into consideration that Plotinus had only been in union with the One four times and his student Porphyry much fewer,¹⁸⁹ one could conclude that the experience in its totality as described here is beyond the reach of the majority of seekers or reserved for the lucky few. At the most, souls will attain a momentary glimpse of the higher spheres, of the perfect unity of Self-referencing of the divine Intellect; as a flight from normal consciousness of powerful intensity. It is likewise questionable as to whether Plotinus intended the full actualization of human intellect in perfect imitation of the *Nous* to be the only means to total redemption. How would he have regarded a person without this experience, who lived a completely sinless and virtuous physical life?

Yet the knowledge of Plotinus' experiences would have been useful and worthwhile enough for his students. The prospect of the union and fulfillment of all desires in the divine lends one's own contemplation all the more significance and appeal. Plotinus' accounts of the ascent accentuated one's awareness of the primal drives in a human being, which ultimately find their greatest meaning and fulfillment at the highest level of the divine. Attuning to our love and desire can culminate in a perfect harmonious relationship with the whole of reality. We can assume that Plotinus' accounts of the ascent served to intensify his students' contemplation so that they may approach attainment of the perfect vision. This included obtaining autarky, as well as resting in complete dependence on the Goodness and Love of primeval origin. At the same time, by making themselves good and virtuous, they could become happier persons. It would not make sense that Plotinus would recommend his students to thereafter turn their backs on other humans, society or world. He himself was very social and among his students in his school in Rome there were many senators.¹⁹⁰

5. Recapitulation of the Main Points from Chapter III

At the heart of Plotinus' philosophy, there were various processes concerning images (section 2) and two in particular: the first was the creation of images by means of contemplation and expression (*Logos*); the second entailed 'imaging' in which the offspring viewed itself as an inferior copy of its source and strived to resemble it, imitating it as model.

The former was predominantly effectuated by the Godhead: the Hypostasis Intellect (*Nous*) was a *Logos* or image of the One; the Soul, a *Logos* and image of the Intellect. Contemplating their higher source, they became one with it. They divided themselves, thereby producing individual intellects and souls, expressions (*logoi*), images or traces of themselves. Thus a creation always derived from the act of contemplation whereby the creator produces a copy of himself. An image was always the consequence of an expression or the transmission of properties which were transmitted to a lower region.

The intelligible world which existed in the divine Intellect served as the archetypes or primeval Forms for all things. Thus things in the material world as well as theoretical conceptions conceived by humans were images of the eternal Forms or Ideas. Images in the lower, visual world were the result of the *Logos* giving the forms (*eidōla*) to matter. In Plotinus' cosmogony, all things and beings were images which participated in their source in some way, so that everything remained connected.

189 *The Life of Plotinus*, 23.16-17: vol. 1 in Armstrong's translation, 3-87.

190 Among Plotinus' hearers were senators and many women. Even Emperor Gallienus and his wife venerated him (*The Life of Plotinus*, 7).

The second facet concerning images in Plotinus' philosophy involved being an image of one's model or source, or the process of 'imaging' which entailed imitating the source in order to become one with it. It took place on the level of the Godhead, as in a Hypostasis (or a lower level of the All-Soul) turning to the higher above it and becoming inseparable from it. It also occurred on the cosmic or human level where this striving to resemble the divine was in particular inherent to the human being. The human soul was an image of the divine Soul; the intellect, her highest part, an image of the *Nous* (section 3). Plotinus' designated the individual soul as a *logos*; the rational soul, the *logistikon*, which comprised the higher region of the soul *logos* and its intellect *nous*. The *logos*' or self-consciousness involved the capacity to process sense data from the physical environment. Its mode of cognition was discursive and through sense perception, it took in exterior material images in order to form knowledge. The human intellect, on the other hand, was oriented to the divine and contemplated the eternal Ideas of the divine Intellect. It had its own particular mode of thought, which comprehended truth in an immediate and intuitive manner.

Yet compared to the level of the Godhead, the effectiveness of imitation on the material or human level seemed sharply diminished. This had to do with the soul's inherent attachment to a physical body, its 'falling' from its divine origin, or the necessity of its orientation to the material world whereby it lost awareness of its heritage or true Fatherland. Subsequently it could fall into delusion or sin.

Plotinus also spoke of imaging within the human mind: the lower, rational soul-*logos* being an image of the higher-*nous*. The human mind also produced images: these included the visual images *eidôla* entering the mind from the outer world through the physical senses which were established in the memory as *phantasiai* or *tupoi*; or images which the imagination produced *phantasmata*. The activity of imaging was of particular interest to the rest of this study, especially as it regarded the psychological development of the human soul. Plotinus saw the human soul as highly complex. Accordingly, his psychology was complicated; his picture of the inner workings of the human mind greatly nuanced, often to the point of being paradoxical. Occasionally his statements appeared misleading-such as his outright claim that the soul *logos* or even the intellect was divine.

Yet the only way for the soul to ultimately approach the divine was to actualize her intellect. Plotinus did not always portray this goal as being easy to attain, due to the obstacles with which the soul had to struggle in order to overcome her physical longings and attachments to the world. Sometimes he referred to the intellect as undescended, not truly belonging to the rest of the soul. Sometimes he portrayed the intellect as having an immediate and automatic connection with the divine with access to the whole intelligible world. By examining Plotinus' psychology, it became obvious that he did not intend to portray the intellect in itself as a god. Instead, the intellect had the potential of becoming godlike, as this was the destination of all humans; a tenet which gave meaning and purpose to this physical life. His position on the divinity of the intellect created paradoxes in his psychology which he neglected to resolve. In the first place, it created an almost inseparable gap between the higher *nous* and the lower rational soul-*logos*, which thrived in a physical body and processed exterior images into worldly knowledge. Plotinus failed to explicitly justify how the human soul, given that its intellect truly belonged to its Father, could jump from its daily physical consciousness to the other mode of thinking in order to actualize that which resembled the divine Intellect. Especially in the framework of contemplating the Ideas, this was an aspect which had particular relevance. In the mode of discursive thought, the lower rational soul could only contemplate the intelligible world in a fragmented manner, one or several Ideas at a time. The intellect was supposedly able to conceive the intelligible world as a whole. Yet I concluded that it was more likely that Plotinus intended the total glimpse of the Ideas to be seen as a potential within the development of the actualization of the intellect (section 3.iv. and vi.).

In this chapter, the depiction of the relationship of the rational soul to her source was of utmost importance. The *logos* and *nous* had a special relationship with the divine (World) Soul or *Logos* and the *Nous*. Their relationship to the divine encompassed an ascent to the source or Godhead which Plotinus described in lyrical detail (section 4). He proposed a trajectory in which a person learned to identify oneself more and more with the Godhead and less and less with the physical world. He basically described two ways to make this ascent. The first was 'intellectually', becoming one with the divine Intellect, contemplating its Ideas; engaging in an immediate and intuitive comprehension of truth. This was essentially the route to the higher intelligible. The second way was by experiencing beauty, love and desire. Love, beauty and desire could certainly be experienced in the human material world, yet it was important to realize that these manifestations of beauty were ultimately illusory. Moreover, the information which the physical senses afforded was transient, hence, as fickle as people's opinions. If one longed for love and beauty, then the only true gratification thereof could only be experienced by seeing these in their true, unchangeable manifestation at the source. In order to see truth, one must become one with it. The condition for doing so, was the actualization of one's intellect and unification with the divine Intellect. As mentioned above, the latter seemed automatic in the consciousness of the intellect, but the soul-*logos* had to labor in order to evolve to this.

This accomplishment entailed the contemplation of true Forms or the world of the Ideas in the *Nous* (section 4). The *Nous* was pure Thought, Being and Life, the latter characterization applied equally to the Ideas. The *Nous* and its intelligible world formed a perfect unity. Consequentially, the divine Intellect possessed perfect Self-knowledge and perfect Self-referentiality in which the subject and object were one: the Intellect was equal to its Intelligibles. The human intellect imitated its divine model by the contemplation of the Intellect's Ideas. In doing so, it also imitated its divine counterpart when it came into existence as an image or *Logos* of the One. At that time, the divine *Nous* turned to meditate on its Father out of desire to know and love its source. In doing so, it experienced ecstasy.

Yet in the long run, the soul's unification with the Intellect, if she were ever to come so far, was insufficient. Plotinus showed that deep in the soul-*nous*, one desired to experience total, pure love: a longing for what is the most real in our existence. To reach this goal, even the divine Intellect must be transcended. Thus the human intellect possessed an inherently strong desire to go beyond the intelligible. Like the divine Intellect, it desired the One or highest Good in which it would experience the highest kind of love and beauty. Essentially Plotinus believed that the 'real' invisible universe was of such an awesome beauty that it inspired passionate love. This reality existed within the depths of the human soul and was within reach of those who desired it. Whatever information the physical senses provided, could only contain a shimmer of the real beauty, love or true knowledge. For this reason, exterior material images required judgment and re-working in one's higher mind, in sight of the eternal Light of the Forms, in order to grasp ultimate truth. This was essential for becoming what one was destined to become: one's true self. *Erôs* was an important factor involved here. It drove the soul back to its source to progressively experience true, pure love, first in the eternal Forms, then in the highest Good. This love and beauty originated from the One and was in itself divine. It was originally communicated to the lower regions of existence from the All-Soul to the human soul, when they came into existence. The return of the soul to its source represented the completion of a cycle which began at the coming of existence of all beings and things from the One.

6. A Short Prelude to Augustine's Reception of Plotinus' Philosophy

As mentioned in Chapter II, Augustine assimilated Plotinus' step-by-step depictions of the ascent to God: beginning with sense perception, moving upwards through the soul, through self-consciousness, to the awareness of being an image of God, the contemplation of the Ideas, and further upwards to unification with God's Light. In Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Dei* in *Gen. litt* in Chapter IV, we will also detect Plotinus' definition of intellect, his notions of turning to God, discussions of ecstasy and visions of God. In Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* in Chapter V, we will see other clear elements of Plotinus' epistemology, for example, in his depiction of self-knowledge and contemplation. Additionally, Augustine integrates into his doctrines Plotinus' conception of the *Nous*' self-contemplation consisting of the equality of the intellect with the intelligible; the differentiation of the lower and higher regions of the mind and two kinds of corresponding knowledge of the rational soul. There are even more: the triad of the thinker, the object of thought and thought itself; the triad of the lover, the beloved and love itself; as well as the notion of the Thinking and Desiring-Loving Intellect. In Augustine's doctrine of the Trinitarian Godhead, he utilizes the triad of Life, Being and Thought and other characteristics of both the *Nous* and the One. Further, in his conception of true love as *amor Dei*, Augustine, too, portrays love and desire as a divine force, which, implanted in the human heart by God, impels one to return to God. As in Plotinus' philosophy, desire and love are in Augustine's view important for obtaining knowledge, self-knowledge and in activating intellectual, contemplative vision which brings it closest to its source. The doctrines mentioned above of both thinkers will be subject to an analysis in Chapter VI. There, too, the discussion of the divinity of the soul and related subjects will be reiterated (Chapter VI.3.iii.f. and 5.v.b.). We will see how Augustine was aware of the contradictions in Plotinus' psychology and epistemology and how he integrated his response to them in a subtle way into his doctrines of the *imago Dei* and *Trinitatis*. We have already seen here how Augustine explicitly dealt with Plotinus' account of the ascent in *Conf.* in Chapter II.1. In Chapter VI, we will see how Augustine formulated his own account of the ascent especially in *Trin.* as an implicit response to this account.

CHAPTER FOUR

ST. AUGUSTINE: ON CREATION, THE IMAGE OF GOD AND THE ASCENT IN HIS COMMENTARIES ON GENESIS

4



1. Introduction

Plotinus demonstrated in his cosmology how the human soul was connected to God in its highest region. The lower parts of the soul were connected to the physical body in some way and to the exterior world as well as its visual images (as reflections of the divine intelligible world). The latter factors influenced one's self-consciousness and brought about a certain mode of (discursive) thinking in which these material images were processed into knowledge. He portrayed the human soul as an image of the divine All-Soul whose potential it was to image the Intellect and the One. The highest part of the soul, the intellect, with its particular mode of consciousness, perception and thought was in Plotinus' philosophy, in particular, the gateway to a deeper understanding of human and divine realities. The development of this consciousness bore with it mankind's teleology: deliverance from the unstable, death oriented and always changing physical world, towards a truer and immortal existence, by becoming one with the eternal Godhead and becoming godlike.

Augustine's variation on the above teleology is depicted in his exegesis of Genesis 1:26, his doctrine of the image of God, which, like that of Plotinus, is embedded in his cosmology, or in Augustine's case, his doctrine of creation in his Genesis commentaries. The expositions in this chapter follow the same structural line as the preceding chapter on Plotinus. It commences with a succinct summary of Augustine's doctrine of creation (section 2). The creation act is effectuated by the second Trinitarian person, the Word of God or pre-existent Christ, in whom the eternal creation principles exist. Accordingly Augustine's theory of Ideas and images will be highlighted in this exposition. The focus will then turn to Augustine's doctrine of the soul (section 3) as human image of the Christ, its major components such as the intellect, in which, as in the exposition of Plotinus' psychology, the relationship of the human image to the Ideas are accentuated. This relationship will be delineated further in section 4 on the ascent to God by means of contemplating the Ideas. The aspects treated in this section serve as preliminaries for Augustine's teaching of the *imago Dei* in *Trin.*, which is the focal point of this dissertation. A recapitulation of the main points from this chapter will be provided in section 5.

But first a few words of introduction on Augustine's doctrine of creation, his exegesis of the creation story in Genesis. His exegesis was attempted in at least five different major works which he wrote within a period of thirty years.¹ For this study, I chose to use primarily *De genesi ad litteram libri XII. (Gen. litt)*.² Completed between 401 and 416,³ this work serves as his most extensive attempt

1 *De genesi contra Manichaeos*, (388-389); *De genesi ad litteram liber unus imperfectus*, (393-394); Books XI-XIII of *Conf.*, (397-401); *De genesi ad litteram libri XII*, (401-416), Book XI of *Civ. Dei*, (approx. 416). When Augustine returned to Thagaste from Rome and Milan in 388, he wrote his first exegesis of Genesis which was primarily intended to refute the Manichaeans and their rejection of the Old Testament. Dissatisfied with his result, he began a new exegesis of Genesis and produced a work which likewise gave him no satisfaction (*Gen. litt imperfectus*). In both works, he treats the *imago Dei* (Gen. 1:26-27) but more so in *imperfectus*. It was not until later in his life that he wrote *Gen. litt* in twelve books (this was in the middle phase of his life), the result of which he claimed himself content. This work represents his most extensive exposition on Gen. 1:26 up until that time. His most extensive elaboration is contained in *Trin.* VII-XV.

2 *De genesi ad litteram libri duodecim*, Bibliothèque Augustinienne. *Oeuvres de Saint Augustin* BA 48 and 49 *La Genèse au sens littéral en douze livres (I-VII)*. Translation, Introduction et Notes par P. Agaësse et A. Solignac; (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer et Cie., 1972); *The Literal meaning of Genesis, St. Augustine*; translation from the Latin, annotated by J. H. Taylor, (New York: Newman, 1982), vol. 1 and 2. (from now on referred to as *Gen. litt*); CSEL 28 1.1-435; On how *Gen. litt* relates to his other commentaries on creation, see E. Hill, *On Genesis: A Refutation of the Manichees, Unfinished Literal Commentary on Genesis, The Literal Meaning of Genesis*. Introductions by M. Fiedrowicz; Translation and notes by E. Hill, ed.: J.E. Rotelle, (New York: New York City Press, 2000). Sometimes Hill's and Taylor numbering of passages do not also correspond. For this reason I will sometimes indicate which translation was used for my sources.

3 He was between 47 and 63 years of age. Hill, *On Genesis*, 164: 'The composition occupied him more than about 15 years. There is a disagreement as to whether he began the work in 399 or 401 or 404. It was published in 416.'

at a 'literal interpretation' of Genesis.⁴ It contains his complete doctrine of creation and also his most extensive elaboration of his exegesis of Gen. 1.26-27 up until *De Trinitate*. Only an impression of his doctrine of creation will be given in this chapter, that is, the main lines which are common to all his interpretations.⁵ Augustine's doctrine of creation also contains numerous complicated issues which are not possible to fully unravel in this succinct exposé.⁶ The most relevant points here are Augustine's teachings of the Word of God, the Creator or his Christology, and of the eternal causal principles (the Ideas), manifesting in the creation act which effectuated the creation of mankind. Parallel to Plotinus' divine Intellect and the intelligible world, the Ideas, existing in the Creator, are the causal principles effectuating the images in the world.

Augustine's theory of Ideas is integrated into his doctrine of creation in *Gen. litt.* It is mentioned in different contexts but is never completely explained, as if he expected his readers to automatically grasp what he meant by 'eternal principles' etc. We can therefore make more sense of his theory when we consult his *De Ideis*.⁷ This short essay is unique for a number of reasons. First of all, because it gives a condensed overview of this crucial aspect in Augustine's creation doctrine, the causal Forms or Ideas. In no other work does he treat the Ideas so extensively as here. It is also unique, due to the fact that no other antique author, whether philosopher or theologian, devoted so much attention to the subject of the Ideas, their definition and the origin of the concept, in spite of the fact that the theory of Ideas of Plato was well known and widely accepted in antiquity. This essay, no. 46 in *De diversis quaestionibus*, also has a marked philosophical nature. It is one of the few of this kind in this collection of his responses to eighty-three miscellaneous theological questions.

Gen. litt. is seminal for this study for a number of other reasons. Here Augustine is concerned with the interpretation of the first three chapters of the account of God's work in the six days of creation up until the sin of Adam and Eve to their expulsion from Eden. How the creation of man, particularly of the human soul, fit into the creation act in Genesis were also important issues for the bishop. *Gen. litt.* is also of importance because Augustine analyzes many aspects of the soul here in the context of the biblical references, which supplement his doctrine of the image of God.

However, of this work itself, Augustine says in his *Retractationes* that it contains more *quaesita* than *inventa* and of the *inventa* only a few are *firmata*.⁸ In the words of R. O'Connell: 'It is not easy to ferret out Augustine's unsettled opinions in *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*. Nothing is more certain

4 Ultimately his interpretation is not so literal as the title promises. It would be more fitting to deem many of his interpretations as allegorical.

5 The most complete overview of Augustine's doctrine of creation in all its facets is C. Mayer's "*Creatio, Creator, creatura*" in: C. Mayer et al. (eds.), *Augustinus-Lexikon*, (=AL) vol. 2, (Basel: Schwabe & Co., 1996-2000), 56-116. For other summaries of Augustine's doctrine of creation, see: A.D. Fitzgerald et al. (eds.), *Augustine through the Ages, An Encyclopedia* (=AttA) (Cambridge: W.B. Eerdmans, 1999): the following articles: R. Williams, "Creation", 251-254, and R.J. Teske "Genesis accounts of Creation", 379-381; É. Gilson, *Introduction à l'Étude de Saint Augustin*, (Paris: J. Vrin, 1929, 1943, 1969 (4e ed), 1982. See 1969, 275-285; S. Knuuttila, "Time and Creation in Augustine" in: E. Stump and N. Kretzmann (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (=CCA), (Cambridge: University Press, 2001), 103-115; S. MacCormack, "Augustine Reads Genesis", in: *Augustinian Studies* 39:1 (2008) Saint Augustine's Lecture 2006, 5-47; M.A. Vannier, *Creatio, Conversio, Formatio chez Saint Augustin*, (Paradosis 31), (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1991); L. Zwollo, "Plotinus' Doctrine of the Λόγος as a Major Influence on Augustine's Exegesis of Genesis", *Augustiniana*, 60 (2010), fasc. 3-4, 235-262.

6 E.g., his interpretation of 'heaven' and 'earth' in Genesis 1 is not always consistent with that of *Confessions* XII-XII.

7 *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus* 46: *De Ideis*; *Saint Augustine Eighty-Three Different Questions*, translated by D. L. Mosher, (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1982); BA 10: *Opusculum X. Mélanges Doctrinaux*; texte de l'Édition Bénédictine. Introductions, traduction et notes: G. Bardy, J.-A. Beckaert, J. Boutet, (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer et Cie., 1952), 123-129. The date of *Div. Qu.* is not certain, around 394-395. (Chronology: P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo, A Biography*, (London: Faber & Faber, 2000).

8 *Retract.* XXIV.24.

than his uncertainties at a number of points.’⁹ The aporetic and convoluted character of this work has to some extent to do with Augustine’s attitude towards the Old Testament. He remarks that it is not his intention to impose his own individual interpretation of the divine Word as being the one and only correct interpretation. He warns us that we should not be hasty in drawing conclusions about the meaning of difficult passages, for example, by hoping that its teaching will conform to ours. He wishes to demonstrate in this work the virtues of the written Word itself, that it is too powerful for the human mind to fathom it in a single reading. The obscure passages of the bible, he adds, were written intentionally to stimulate our thought.¹⁰ Hence, in several books of this work Augustine grapples with his doctrine of soul, discussing at least three or four different themes at the same time, some, a continuation of certain discussions from previous chapters, while others are added.¹¹ His explanation is full of many detours and it is not always easy to filter out his conclusions on the soul.¹² Because of the pondering nature of the work, there are some inconsistencies evident in Augustine’s doctrine of the soul. However there is nonetheless much valuable material to ‘ferret out’ from his doctrine of the *imago Dei*.

2. Augustine’s Doctrine of Creation: Ideas and Images

2.i. The Word of God and the Creation of the World

In the book of Genesis, the Creator is simply referred to as ‘God’. Augustine’s basis for his conception of the Creator was then not just ‘God’, but the whole Holy Trinity; yet even more so, Christ, the Son, through whom the world was made.¹³ Augustine’s portrayal of the Creator as the source of creation in *Gen. litt* is as follows: the Creator was begotten when God the Father ‘spoke’ in the realm of eternity and thereby generated a Son, the Word of God.¹⁴

The Word being eternally uttered by the Father is the equivalent of the Son being eternally born of the Father, and so, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God.¹⁵ The Word, the Son, is the ‘beginning’ (as in ‘*In the beginning...*’. Latin: *In principio*) and the origin of all things. Augustine correlated the Creator God in Genesis to the first five verses of the Gospel of John: the *Logos* or

9 Cf: R.J. O’Connell, *The Origin of the Soul in Augustine’s Later Works*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 1987) 202.

10 *Gen. litt* I.1, I.19.38, 21-41; VII.28, 42-43 (Hill).

11 One of the intertwining themes here is Augustine’s probing for an exegetical justification for the words in Genesis: ‘*And so it was done*’ and to repeat thereafter, ‘*And God made...*’ and why in the Scriptures these expressions do not seem to occur when referring to the creation of light or of humans. I am omitting this and other discussions from this exposition because of their lack of relevance for Augustine’s doctrine of the *imago Dei*.

12 As noted above, I will be skimming over the broad range of questions concerning the numerous hypotheses which Augustine probed throughout the twelve books of *Gen. litt*. and often found no satisfying solution. Instead I gladly refer to R. O’Connell’s excellent study above in which these multi-faceted issues are untangled. A few examples: how did the soul come into the body from the spiritual region of the angels and Light and into a physical body in order to lead an individual life of its own? Could the soul possibly have been responsible for sinning before leading an individual life? What is the substance of the spiritual entity, soul, and what happens to this substance or matter when confronted with the physical matter of the human body which was evolved by the casual and seminal reasons? What exactly is the soul’s relationship to the causal reasons? See also R.J. Teske, “Soul” *AttA*, 807-812 for a succinct summary of Augustine’s exploration of arguments on the soul in *Gen litt*.

13 See note 17. Augustine’s direct correlation of *Christus Creator* is not always recognized in secondary literature. These authors do use the term, i.e.: C. Mayer, “Creatio”, *AL* 2002, 71-72 and the numerous references on p. 74, relating the incarnate Jesus Christ to the Son and the Word of God, as Creator; W. Geerlings, *Augustinus*, (Freiburg-in-Breisgau: Herder Verlag, 1999).

14 *Gen. litt*. I.2.6; I.4.9; I.5.11 (Taylor); *Gen. litt. imperf.* 5.19 (Hill), *Conf.* XI.5.7, 6.8, and 7.9-end.

15 Explicated by Hill, *Trinity*, 172 note 5.

Divine Word through which and in which all things were made, referring to the Son of God, Christ and hence, the Creator. Augustine translated the divine *Logos* of John with the term: *Verbum Dei*.¹⁶

Our reply to these questions is that God made heaven and earth in the beginning, not in the beginning of time, but in Christ, since he was "the Word with the Father" through which and in which all things were made (Jn. 1:1-3). Our Lord Jesus Christ, you see, on being questioned by the Jews about who he really was, answered, "The beginning, as which I am also speaking to you. (Jn. 8:25). (Gen. contra man. I.2.3¹⁷)

In Genesis, creation came to being when God spoke. Augustine's interprets this as God's Word, his Son, who in turn, created the world by 'speaking'. 'But when the Sons speaks, the Father speaks, because in the speech of the Father, the Word, who is the Son, is uttered according to God's eternal way...' (Gen. litt I.5.11). Here we see a baffling correspondence to Plotinus' theogony in which the energy of the *Logos* brings forth the Intellect and the Soul -as utterances or images of the preceding deity. The difference here with Augustine's *Logos* is that although there is an implied hierarchy in the relationship between Father-Son, no such hierarchy in the divine Godhead exists.

2.ii. The Creator: Perfect Image and Source of the Ideas: Eternal Creation Principles

By speaking, the *Verbum Dei* materialized the eternal Ideas (*Formae*) and reasons (*Rationes aeternae*) which existed in His mind. The Ideas, synonymous with Forms, Reasons or Types (*species*), were models for things in the universe.¹⁸ (This will be explained in more detail in section v.) 'The form (*ratio*) therefore, according to which a creature is created, exists first in the Word of God before the

16 Div. Qu. nr. 63 De Verbo.

17 The English translations of Augustine's commentaries on Genesis in this chapter are Hill's unless otherwise specified. For Augustine, the Word of God, the Son of God, the Creator (through which all things were made John 1:1-5) is also "Truth and uncreated Wisdom". The incarnation of the Word in world history is Jesus Christ. Christ is also the pre-existent Word, Life and Light, is therefore the Creator (Gen. litt. imperf. 3.6). Gen. litt states Christ as Creator less directly: I.2.6, I. 4. 9 and I. 5. 11. In Trin. these terms of Creator are associated with Christ in the same context. (e.g.: IV.1.3, 3.5, 3.6, 4.7, 10.13 and 21.31; VI.1.1 and 9.10; VII.1.2, 3.4, 4.5 and 6.12). As will be evident further up in this exposition, not just "God" or his Word was involved in the act of creation, but the three persons of the Holy Trinity, Gen. litt I.6.12; Gen. litt. imperf. 16.61.

18 Div. Qu. No. 46: De Ideis (1): '...the Ideas are certain original and principal forms of things, i.e. reasons, fixed and unchangeable, which are not themselves formed and being thus eternal and existing always in the same state, are contained in the Divine Intelligence. And though they themselves neither come into being and pass away...everything which can come into being and pass away... is said to be formed in accord with these ideas.'

There are, on the one hand, Ideas or *Formae*. On other hand, there are rational or reason principles *Rationes*. So we have here two distinct concepts which share common functions. Both concepts are present in his creation doctrine. The *Rationes* or reason principles are manifestations of the Ideas or Forms in their work in material creation. What Augustine confirms here, is that the two terms are however so alike that the term Ideas or *Formae* can be used synonymously with *Rationes*.

De Ideis: (1) 'Hence in Latin we can call the ideas either "forms (*formae*) or "species" (*species*), which are literal translations of the word. But if we call them "reasons" (*Rationes*), we obviously depart from a literal translation of the term, for "reasons" (*Rationes*) in Greek are called λόγος, not "ideas" (LZ: ιδέα). Yet, nonetheless, if anyone wants to use "reason" (*ratio*), he will not stray from the thing in question, for in fact, the ideas are certain original and principal forms of things, i.e. reasons, fixed and unchangeable, which are not themselves formed and, being thus eternal and existing always in the same state, are contained in the Divine Intelligence.'

For a more extensive summary of Augustine's creation doctrine and his theory of *Rationes*, see O'Connell, *Origin of Soul*, 205; also for developments in Augustine's doctrine of *Rationes*. O'Connell refers also to BA 48, 653-68]; V. Boland, *Ideas in God According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, Source and Synthesis*. (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 41-45, 78-85; Zwollo, "Plotinus', *Logos*", 2010, 242-243.

*actual creation of the work itself.*¹⁹ Augustine integrates Christ into the creation story in Genesis by interpreting the words *in principio*, which he explains, do not refer to a temporal creation or even to the initiation of time (as the *archê* of the *Logos* in John's Gospel), but to the creation principle itself, the origin of all things, the *Verbum Dei* or the ontological foundation of the universe.²⁰ Therefore, Augustine designates the *Verbum* as the Form or Reason Principle.²¹ At the same time, Augustine emphasizes that Christ, the *Verbum Dei*, as Son of God, is the most Perfect Image of the Father and completely equal to him (*Verbum similitudinis*). As the Father, He is eternal, immutable, transcendent and perfect.²² God the Father, His Son and the Holy Spirit are one and in unison, they created the world. Augustine adds '*There is a kind of love in this activity...*' (*Gen. litt* I.5.11). This is an explicit reference to his doctrine of love in *Trin.*, of the love between the Father and Son which produced the Holy Spirit. (See Chapter V.2.ii.).

2.iii. Ontology

Augustine saw the creation process, as did Plotinus, as divided roughly into two ontological realms: i. that of eternity and ii. of time and space, the latter of which is of matter, physicality and measurable dimensions.²³ The world of time and space in which we live, is, according to Augustine, characterized by its changeability which is a direct consequence of its imperfection. He no doubt pondered the lack of coherence in the notion of an eternal and immutable God which produced a world which is temporal and constantly in a state of flux. To resolve this discrepancy, a creative, divine entity was required which can manifest in both worlds.²⁴ This he reserved for his divine Word, Christ, who as Creator of the World serves an Intermediary.²⁵ He can manifest equally in the world of the transcendent and eternal as well as the world of the senses. There is a strict ontological distinction in Augustine's creation doctrine between the Creator on the one hand and the creation or creatures on the other. The Son and the Father are equal in their divinity. The Son is nonetheless unlike his Father, because of his quality of being both transcendent and immanent as well as by his earthly Incarnation.²⁶ Yet for Augustine, there still remains an ontological discrepancy between the eternal and immutable realm of God, His Word-the Creator vs. the temporal, changeable world in movement-his creation. Plotinus' system of the *Logos* and *Logoi* provided Augustine with an excellent solution which he integrated in his conception of the two phases of creation and his theory of *Rationes* or Ideas.²⁷

2.iv. The Six Days of Creation or the Two Creation Phases

Augustine saw that this discrepancy could be resolved when we consider the creation act occurring, initially at least, within the eternal realm itself. To justify this however, there must have been two

19 *Gen. litt* II.8.17 (Hill); also I.5.11; I.2.6; I.5.11; II.8.17, V.13.29 (Taylor); *Conf.* XI. 9.11; 12.

20 *Conf.* XI. 9. 11.

21 In *Conf.* XI.2-9, Augustine states the Word of God as Form or Rational Principle more explicitly. Note the similarities in Plotinus, who designated the second Hypostasis, Intellect, as the origin of the Ideas and the *Logos* as the divine Form principle. Note also the similarities between Plotinus' second Hypostasis, Intellect, where the intelligible world exist.

22 *Gen. litt* I.4.9; I.2.6. (Taylor)

23 Plotinus' ontology is treated in Chapter III.2.ii.d.

24 This was condition postulated by Philo Judaeus in *Opificio Mundi*, as well as by other early Christian thinkers.

25 e.g.: *Conf.* XI.2.4.

26 If God the Father is not immanent yet the Son is equal to the Father, then the Son cannot be immanent. In *Trin.* I-VII, Augustine resolves the antinomy in the relationship of the divine persons (Father and Son) and argues how they can be of equal substance.

27 Cf: Agaësse and Solignac, *BA* 48 «Les raisons causales» (653, 657-668); «Le *Logos* et les *Logoi* chez Plotin» (654-657).

phases in the creation process: the first in the eternal realm, the second -as elaboration of the first-, in the temporal. The first act of creation must have taken place simultaneously within 'one moment' or flash in eternity: *in actu condendi*. By positing this, Augustine could safeguard the eternal nature of the Creator as well as his equality and union with God the Father. Within this framework, the completion of creation within six calendar days as told in Genesis could not be understood literally. The number six had a symbolic significance, Augustine asserted, and hence, in this context, referred to a logical sequence of events which unfolded during the creation act.²⁸

The first phase of creation, the *prima conditio*²⁹ involved the creation of heaven and earth, but not the visible heaven and earth which we are accustomed to perceiving with our corporeal senses. '*In the beginning God created heaven and earth. And then by the expression "heaven" we must understand a spiritual created work already formed and perfected, which is, as it were, the heaven of this heaven which is the loftiest in the material world.*' (*Gen. litt* I.9.15)³⁰

Thus the 'heaven of the heavens' *caelum caeli* was the first product of creation, a realm of pure Light, intelligence and knowledge which is closest to God.³¹ This was the domicile of the angels: heavenly beings enlightened with God's Wisdom by the *Verbum*, having received formation.³² This was also the origin of the human soul as well as the destination of saints after their death.³³ (The angelic realm plays an important role in Augustine's exegesis of Gen. 1:26-27, the image of God. See section 3.ii.b.) Then the Word created the 'invisible earth' which was, in other words, 'intelligible matter'. Within matter, the four elements (*elementa mundi*) came into being which were impregnated with causal reason principles or *Rationes causalis*.³⁴ These principles contained the laws of development and outlines for every future living being in the visible world. Thus, intelligible matter was impregnated with form in this same phase.³⁵

We can confirm here that Augustine's doctrine of matter resembles that of Plotinus:³⁶ it exists at the furthest distance from God, contains the least essence of God and is in itself an unstable product. By the donation of form to matter, or its formation, material things acquired a certain stability. Accordingly, a created thing or creature composed of form and matter, possessed a certain unity in itself as a finished product (as in a unity of parts to their whole). Creatures and things were thus 'pre-formed'

28 *Gen. litt* II; IV.33.52; V.23.46, V.11.27 (*Gen. litt. imp.* 7.28) (Hill). The six days also symbolize for Augustine the six ages which are to come in world history: *Trin.* IV.4.7.

29 This term occurs in *Gen. litt* V.5.12-16.

30 See also Augustine's exegesis of 'heaven': *Gen. litt* book I.3.7, 5.10, 9.15-17, 17.32; book II.8.16-19; book III.20.30-31; book IV.22.35. Delineated in section 3 on *imago Dei*. See note 77 for a full notation of his exegesis.

31 Cf: *Enn.* V.8.3.27-end, 4, in which Plotinus describes 'Heaven' which is the realm of the *Nous*. Here the gods are in constant contemplation of the One. '*Each walks not as if on alien ground, but each one's place is its very self...*'

32 The beings of this reality are perfect creatures in respect to those with a carnal body, on account of their perfect formation in the first creation phase, by means of the Illumination of the *Verbum*. *Gen. litt* I.4.9-11; III.20.31.

33 *Gen. litt* I.17.32; *Conf.* XII.2.3-3. 4. The Creator (uncreated 'Wisdom and Truth') made the heavens as the (created) pure intellectual realm of light, wisdom and truth. In this way the Light of the Word was imparted to this realm-and so it became a realm of Light.

34 *Gen. litt* V.13.29; VI.1-2; IX.15.28; I.2-3; IV.9.

35 *Gen. litt* I.14.28, 15.29.

36 The difference with Plotinus' view on intelligible matter: the Idea Matter (originated in the Intellect) is transmitted to Nature-Soul (in the divine and transcendent realm of the hypostasis Soul) from which physical matter is made (see Chapter III.2.iii.). Another difference is that Plotinus attributes matter with the potential of doing evil (see Chapter III.3.v.).

primordially in the first creation phase: invisibly, potentially and causally.³⁷ In sum, the creation act predominantly consisted of the process of formation (*Gen. litt* V.5.14).

In the second creation phase, the *administratio*,³⁸ the rational principles unfolded in the material world within the realm of time. In this way, all kinds of physical beings with souls came into existence and are still being produced. The creation in the second phase was largely carried out by seminal 'reasons' or *Rationes seminales*,³⁹ the invisible, rational principles which were established in intelligible matter and developed and grew in the manner of seeds. They unfolded in accordance with the eternal Forms and eventually actualized all things in the visible world. Seminal reasons were also associated with numbers which manifested in the dimension of time and multiplicity. Augustine's borrowing of Plotinus' system of *Logoi* is evident here; the term *Rationes seminales* is mere translation of *Logoi spermatikoi*, the form-bearing principles from origin in the divine Intellect and *Logos*.⁴⁰

It was in the second creation phase that God instigated the commencement of world history. The material world remained governed and maintained by the *Rationes causales*, in complete dependency of God's will by divine Providence (*Gen. litt* V.23.44-Hill). The *Rationes* assured the order, reasonability and stability of established species. Their impact in the *administratio* phase explained how God could 'rest' on the seventh day, while the initial creation act was perpetuated in cosmic history.⁴¹

The two moments of creation match up to the ontological levels mentioned earlier. For example, God, the Creator, the *Verbum*, the Ideas and the *Rationes aeternae*, exist above the creation, yet they are directly involved in the first phase of creation which was an intelligible, eternal realm of *Rationes causales*. The physical, visible world, effectuated by the *Rationes seminales*, is subject to time and changeability and correspond to with the second creation phase. Viewing this system as a whole, God the Father and the *Verbum* are perfect: the angelic, (intelligible) created realm is less perfect,⁴² and the material realm of the cosmos is unquestionably deficient. Yet the *Rationes* all remain in connection with each other and thus resolve the ontological discrepancies between the eternal, divine realm and the sensible world of time. The three types of *Rationes* assume a mediatory function between the *Verbum* and the visible world.⁴³

This extensive exposition on Augustine's doctrine of *Rationes* was necessary because it is of direct relevance to Augustine's discussions of the soul and also to his theory of Ideas, which will be discussed in the upcoming subsections and also section 4.ii. of this chapter on Augustine's account of the ascent. It will also enter into many important discussions in the final analyses of this study, in Chapter VI (for example 2.v. on 'Divine Mediation'). There Augustine's doctrines will be compared

37 *Gen. litt* VI.6.10; IX.17.22. Matter plays an important role in Augustine's exegesis of Genesis. The church father defends *creatio ex nihilo* that God did not create the world from his own being. As such he did not posit the existence of matter before the existence of creation. Augustine's theory of matter, specifically how matter and form were brought together, is another example of a complicated issue which is presented here in the briefest terms. Augustine did mention intelligible matter (in the context of the four elements) yet it fell within the intelligible realm of the 'first creation'. This study will not deal with Augustine's exploration of the issue of 'spiritual matter', an issue which is also questioned by Plotinus.

38 *Gen. litt* V.4, 10-11, 8.23, 9.24, 11.27, etc. (Taylor)

39 *Gen. litt* I.5.9; IV.23.52; VI.10.17; VI.11.19; V.16.34 (Hill). A clear representation of the *Rationes seminales* is also given in *Trin.* III.8.13-14 and III.9.16. Augustine must have noted the allusion to physical bodies and "seed" in I Cor. 14:44.

40 Zwollo, "Plotinus', *Logos*", 256-257.

41 *Gen. litt* IV.12.22; VI.10.17-19; VI. 14.25,15.26.

42 E.g.: the lesser perfection has to do with the potential changeability of beings of the *caelum caeli*; Augustine is thinking here of the fall of angels such as Lucifer, as well as the human soul, which is mutable.

43 Agaësse and Solignac, *BA* 48, «Les raisons causales», 653, 657-668; *ibid*, "Le *Logos* et les *Logoi* chez Plotin", 654-657.

to Plotinian concepts and analyzed in order to determine how Augustine utilized them. Now we will proceed to a synthesis of Augustine's doctrine of the *Rationes* in the context of Augustine's theory of Ideas.

2.v. Synthesis: the Ideas of God and the Rationes

Augustine's theory of Ideas assumes the Platonic notion that the things in our world are images or reflection of the Forms and Reason principles, the models for the physical world. Following Plotinus (or Middle-Platonism), he posited that these exist in the intellect of the Creator. The Ideas and the rational principles are the invisible building blocks of the material world which become objective only in the second creation phase. The reason principles and the Forms, although they both have different functions in the creation, work alongside each other. Augustine treats them as synonymous.⁴⁴ Altogether, these creating reasons exist on three levels of existence: that of the Creator (*Rationes aeternae*) and in the two phases of creation: the first or intelligible phase (*Rationes causalis*) and the second or corporeal phase (*Rationes seminalis*).⁴⁵ As such, the *Rationes* serve as connecting principles between the three levels of existence, as intermediaries between the different ontological levels. All things in this world exist as well in the divine Ideas, not just to the species in which it belongs, but in an individual Idea in God. As such all created things have a double existence: in their own nature and in the eternal Ideas. All created things (and creatures) are composed of matter and form and are thus a *concreatum*, having God as their cause. All things which came to be did so by receiving their Being from God who is Absolute Being.

Thus the assertion that Christ created the world by 'speaking and materializing the eternal Ideas (*Formae*) and reasons (*Rationes aeternae*)' (point ii.) is essentially equivalent to saying: the world is an image of the Ideas and rational principles in Christ's Mind. The eternal Ideas, here correspond with *Rationes aeternae* or *creandi* and are one and the same with the Creator, the *Verbum Dei*. Hence, one of the particular missions of the Son within the Holy Trinity is as Form and Reason principle of all things.⁴⁶ Being the 'expression, utterance' of the God the Father, the *Verbum* encompasses the total Wisdom (*Sapientia*) of his Father. (This is in particular elaborated in *Trin.*) It thus follows that the term divine Wisdom is associated to some degree with the Ideas, the entire invisible, immutable and intelligible basis of all creation. More specifically, divine Wisdom is the perfect and complete knowledge of how the creation act was performed and how the world was made.⁴⁷ This is an important association which will be discussed in the context of Augustine's epistemology and in Augustine's doctrine of the image of God in which acquiring divine knowledge and contemplating the Ideas plays a significant role. The images of the divine Ideas on the other hand, are different in character. To explain this further, we will return to Augustine's theory of Ideas in the next sections regarding the creation of human beings and their formation. Shortly, we will also deal with Augustine's definition of images (in section viii).

44 In his essay *De Ideis*, (*Div. Qu* 46-1) he brings up the subject of the translation of the *logos* in the context of his doctrine of the Ideas. The Latin translation of the Greek word *idea*, Augustine expounds, is *forma* or *species*. He reminds us that *forma* can also signify *ratio* (Greek = *logos*). *Ratio* (*logos*) and *forma* (*idea*) are then, in Augustine's point of view, synonymous. He explains that this is because the meaning of the term *ratio* also includes rational principles of knowledge and intelligibility which are inherent in the Ideas. Cf. Zwollo, "Plotinus', *Logos*", 245. See note 18.

45 *Gen. litt.* V.12.28

46 i.e.: *Sermo* 117; H. Meinhardt, "Idee", in: J. Ritter and K. Gründer (eds.) *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Band 4: I-K; (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976) 55-65, 64; Kondoleon correctly points out that Augustine never confronted the discrepancy of the plurality of Ideas in relation to the unity of the divine Mind. T. Kondoleon, "Divine Exemplarism in Augustine", *Augustinian Studies* (1970), vol. I, 181-195, 185. Plotinus did recognize this.

47 Cf. Kondoleon, "Divine Exemplarism", 189 on Augustine's association of the *Verbum Dei* with Ideas and Wisdom

2.vi. The Creation of Human Beings

Augustine posited that the creation act occurred in one eternal flash, yet the order in which all things were made progressed along a logical sequence. This is why he delineated aspects of both creation phases separately, to show that the whole visible world consists of a combination of elements from the first and second phases of creation. The visible world was composed of matter and form; human beings were composed of a body and a soul. Regarding the creation of human beings, Augustine is then faced with a problem: how did the soul, which originated in the first creature of the first creation phase (*caelum caeli*), come together with the body, which came into existence in the second phase? And how could this solution be legitimized by biblical passages? As Augustine saw it, the formation of the human body alone was narrated in Genesis 2:7: '*And God fashioned the man with dust from the earth, and puffed into his face the puff of life, and the man was made into a living soul.*'

⁴⁸ His interpretation of these verses is that the creation of physical bodies actually began with the creation of earth-the intelligible earth or 'matter' in the first phase of creation (*Gen. litt* III.22.34). This matter was impregnated with *Rationes* (Forms), which was further developed into visible matter (the 'dust' in Genesis) in the second phase of creation by *Rationes seminalis*. According to the two creation stories which Augustine recognized in Genesis, a human soul is therefore a *Ratio causalis* and his corporeal development is instigated by *Ratio seminalis* (*Gen. litt* VII.22.32), transmitted from the *Ratio causalis* in collaboration with divine Will (VII.14.25). This is essentially the same in Plotinus' cosmology: the soul is a *logos* and the body, which is attached to nature, the lower region of the soul, is developed by *logoi spermatikoi*. Augustine found the legitimacy for this conception in the two creation stories in the Old Testament. In his anthropology we can recognize the same mild dualism between body and soul as is present in Plato's and Plotinus' philosophies. The physical body is equipped with perceptual senses which are oriented to the material, experiential world, time and space. Matter and the physical body, compared to immaterial form or the human soul, have a depreciated ontological status. Augustine affirms that the soul is nonetheless present in all parts of the body.⁴⁹ The body is *homo exterior* and the soul *homo interior* (*Gen. litt* III.22.34).⁵⁰ The whole human being as creature belongs to the world of the senses-to the world of images, images of the Ideas. Gilson elucidates Augustine's view on the creation of the human being:

*Since all creatures are images of the divine Ideas, there is not one of them in which the perfection of their common cause (LZ: God or the Rationes in God) does not find expression. Every created being is determined by an intelligible formula (ratio) which defines what it has to be according to its nature; so it has shape, form, order, measure and beauty. Even change and becoming can be expressed in intelligible terms by means of numbers.*⁵¹

48 Hill's translation from *Gen. litt* VII.1.1. From New International Version <http://www.biblegateway.com>. (2014): '*The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.*' Also *Gen. litt* III.22.34, VI.1, VI.11.19, VII.16.22 and VII.17.23.

49 G.B. Matthews points out that for Augustine it is not the body (the outer man) seeing when it sees something through the physical eyes, it is the soul-the inner man. "The Inner man" in: R. Markus (ed.), *Augustine, A Collection of Critical Essays* (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1972) 177-189.

50 Cf: C. Horn, "Anthropologie" in: V.H. Drecoll (ed.), *Augustin Handbuch*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 481. Other references of Augustine to the inner and outer man, e.g.: *Civ. Dei* XIII.24, *Ep.* 238, 12, *Trin.* XI-XII.

51 Gilson, *Introduction*, 260; *ibid*, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1972) 74.

Gilson suggests here that according to Augustine, an individual person or soul,⁵² an individual *ratio*, is a particular of an intelligible, immaterial Idea or creation principle.⁵³ Yet this is not what Augustine portrays in *Gen. litt.* Augustine does affirm that every human being is a descendant from Adam and Eve. On the other hand, he is reserved about making any certain statements on whether Adam and Eve were the first particulars of the Idea 'Human Being' or something of that nature.⁵⁴ The hypothesis that every individual human being may be an image of an Idea, is not something Augustine readily settles for. In fact he finds that it demands further elucidation and further specification, which will be briefly discussed here.

To begin with, the human soul *ratio*, as stated in *Gen. litt.* III.20.30, had been created at the same time as the angelic intelligence of the *caelum caeli*, the pure intellectual realm of light. Yet he questions this in book VI.

For in that first creation of the world when God created all things simultaneously (LZ: the first phase of the creation act, the prima conditio which took place in eternity and not in the dimension of time), He created man in the sense that He made the man who was to be, that is, the causal principle of man to be created, not the actuality of man already created. (Gen. litt. VI.9.16)

One of the many problems here is, is it the whole human being which is a causal principle created in the realm of celestial intelligence? And how can this be reconciled with Augustine's view that the two creation stories in Genesis, the one depicting the creation of the human body and the other, the creation of the soul? *'But now the question has to be faced how we can understand its causal formula being said to have been there in the first works of God during the six days, when God made man to his image, which can only be rightly understood with reference to the soul.'* (*Gen. litt.* VII.22.32). Subsequently he struggles with a number of different inquiries simultaneously, exploring different ways in which the verses in Genesis could possibly correspond to his theory of *Rationes*. He makes several attempts which continue through books VI and VII in *Gen. litt.* and finally reaches a conclusion⁵⁵ that it is indeed likely that the soul-the *imago Dei* was originally created at the same time as the realm of angels and that it was subsequently breathed into the body at the creation of the body (which he discusses further and at length in books IX and X.) However the process of the individuation of the souls from the primordial soul in the realm of the angels is a tough question for which he finds no satisfying answer. He remains reticent as well about speculating on the pre-existence of the soul.⁵⁶

In *Gen. litt.* III.20.30 (as well as in the quote above), Augustine specifies that the image of God can only be located in the soul and not the body of humans. The image is located specifically in the

52 What makes a human being a 'person' for Augustine, is the soul. A.C. Lloyd, "On Augustine's Concept of a Person" in: Markus, *Augustine. A Collection*, 191-205.

53 *Gen. litt.* V.15.33, 16.34 and *Trin.* IV.1.3. See Gilson, *Introduction*, note 50. On the question of whether Ideas of particular individuals exist: *Ep.* 14.4; In *De libero arbitrio* (III.iv.13) he links the *Rationes rerum* with degrees of being. This seems to signify that there are individual types of things rather than particular individuals. O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind*, (London: Duckworth, 1987), 189-199.

54 *Ep.* 137.3. See also: O'Connell, *Origin of Soul*; Teske, "Soul", 809. Agaësse and Solignac, «Les problèmes de l'âme dans le «De genesi ad litteram» BA 48, 695-706.

55 A conclusion which was already drawn in *Conf.* XII-XIII and *Gen. litt.* III.20-30-31 but which he re-introduced later in *Gen. litt.* X in the form of a "hypothesis", subsequently subjecting it to analysis, ultimately confirming the validity of this conclusion.

56 Cf.: O'Connell, *Origin of the Soul*, 201-245, 241-245.

highest part of the soul, the only region in the mind, the *ratio* or *mens*, above which nothing exists except God Himself.⁵⁷ This being so, then the human being or the soul as image of a specific Idea is not Augustine's final answer as Gilson suggested. The soul, as image of God, is only the image of her Creator.

2.vii. Augustine's Definition of 'Image'⁵⁸

Now we will focus on a few particular elements from the subsection above which will serve as a preliminary to Augustine's doctrine of the image of God. The departure point of Augustine's cosmology is his theory of Ideas, which entailed that all things in the visual world are images of an intelligible, transcendent counterpart (Idea) existing in the divine Creator's intelligence. Plotinus indicated a material image of an Idea with the term *eidôlon*; but Augustine seldom connotes these with the term 'image' (*imago*). In *De Ideis*, an 'image' is referred to as 'individual or particular things' (*singula*). He does treat the term 'image' in other essays in *Div. Qu.*, such as no. 83 in which the term *imago* is equated to 'resemblance' (also in *Gen. litt. imperfect.* 59). Additionally, he equates visual images with the objects of 'corporeal vision', (*Gen. litt. XII.7.16*) (See section 4.iii.b. for Augustine's theory of three visions.) In *Trin.* he employs the term *vestigium* (translated as vestige or trace), to signify generally the same as what Plotinus refers to as image or trace (*eikôn, eidôlon, ichnos*).⁵⁹ These all have to do with something invisible contained within the physical form of an object or body which resembles an eternal, intelligible Form but is far from being divine itself.

Augustine speaks of three other types of images in his doctrine of creation: the second kind is derived from the visual images which are picked up by our physical senses, called *imagines*. They are stored up in the memory and when recalled, the term *phantasia* is used as recollection.⁶⁰ Another term for 'image' is the *phantasma*, images of corporeal images constructed by the imagination. These kinds of images are experienced in 'spiritual vision' (*Gen. litt. XII.7.16*). In the essay *De Ideis*, Augustine demonstrates that it is the mental capacity, which he called the rational soul, with which we grasp and judge the relation of the images of the visual world in their resemblance to and participation with the true Ideas in the Mind of the Creator. In *Gen. litt. XII*, Augustine refers to the true understanding of these images in the higher region of the soul as an intellectual vision.⁶¹ *Visio intellectualis* takes place in the region of the human soul which he defines in his doctrine of creation as the *imago Dei*, the human mind or intellect, which constitutes the third kind of image. Intellectual vision involves the awareness or knowledge acquired by the human intellect when contemplating the Ideas. The fourth type of usage of the term 'image' by Augustine is the Perfect Image, pertaining to Christ, the Son of God of God the Father, the former of whom is also the origin of divine Ideas or Forms.⁶²

57 *De Ideis*; *Gen. litt.* III.20.31; III.22.34; V.13.30; *Trin.* XI.5.8, XIV.14.20.

58 L. Zwollo, "St. Augustine's Mystagogical instruction of Ideas and images, in: P.J.J. van Geest (ed.), *Seeing Through the Eyes of Faith*, LAHR 10, 2014. Forthcoming 2016.

59 *Trin.* VI.10.12, XII.5.5; See also Chapter V.3.i., and iii.e.; Sullivan, *Image of God*, 87-88.

60 In *Gen. litt.* XII.6.15, 7.16, 18, 8.19, 9.20, 10.21, 11.22, etc. Augustine is treating here images in spiritual visions (*phantasia, phantasmata, imagines*), as the second of the three types of visions. These kinds of images are also depicted in *Conf.* X.8.12-21.31 on *memoria*; also in *Trin.*, e.g.: VIII.6.9, IX.6.10, IX.5.8, etc.

61 To be treated in the section 4.iii of this chapter. See *Gen. litt.* XII.6.15; 7.16; 7.18; 8.19; 9.20; 10.21, 11.22 (Taylor) etc. These images are explained in terms of the three types of visions.

62 *Gen. litt.* IX.16.28, *Gen. litt. imperfect.* 60-61, *De Ideis*.

2.vii.a The Influence of Plotinus

Augustine's general definition of image is no different than that of Plotinus: an image can be a likeness of that which it is an image of, but this likeness does not necessarily imply an exact resemblance or an equality (See Plotinus: Chapter III.2.iii.d). For example:

But when he reaches higher principles...He will leave that behind (LZ: his lower nature) and choose another, the life of the gods: for it is to them, not to good men, that we are to be made like. Likeness to good men is the likeness of two pictures of the same subject to each other; but likeness to the gods is likeness to the model, a being of a different kind to ourselves. (Enn. I.2.7.24, 27-30)

Statements such as this in the *Enneads* designate a contrast between the likeness of images of God- the human intellect- and the gods themselves. This dissimilarity involves a different kind of being or substance than that of the divine entities. In a comparable passage below, Augustine mentions the immaterial Ideas (in this context, the Virtues) which are perceived by the human intellect in their true existence, in contrast to bodies or bodily images. Augustine makes a clear differentiation between the God the Creator-where the Ideas exist, and the creature: in this case, the image of God, the human intellect.

*So too in that third category of things seen by intellectual vision, there are some that are seen in the soul itself, like the virtues (LZ: These are Ideas)...Yet it is only intellectually that they can be seen; **they are not, after all, bodies nor do they have bodily images.** But the light itself is something else, the light by which the soul is enlightened in order to truly understand and observe all the things either in itself or in this light. For this light is God himself, while **the soul is a creature, even though a rational and intelligent one made to his image.** (Gen. litt XII. 31.59)*

The following quotes illustrate the visual images (in Augustine's Latin: *imagines* or *phantasma/phantasiae*, which are derived from the Greek *phantasiai*) which are stored in the memory and judged by the intellect when contemplating the Ideas. Here we note an exact borrowing from Plotinus' system of images. Both thinkers even utilize a similar terminology.

PLOTINUS: *For remembering (mnēmoneuein) is either thinking (ê noein) or imaging (ê phantazesthai); and the images (ê phantasia) come to the soul not by possession, but as it sees, so it is disposed; and if it sees sense-objects (ta aisthêta), it sinks low in proportion to the amount of them it sees. For because it possesses all things in a secondary way, and not so perfectly [as Intellect]... (Enn. IV.4.3.7-10)⁶³*

AUGUSTINE: *So too we absorb the images of bodily things (phantasias rerum corporalium) through the senses of the body and transfer them somehow to the memory (memoriae) and from them we fabricate images (ficto phantasmate) with which to think about things we have not seen... but whenever we correctly approve or disapprove of something represented by such images, we have the inescapable conviction that we make our judgment ...by altogether different rules which abide unchangeably above our minds. Thus when I call to mind the ramparts of Carthage which I have seen, and form a picture of those in Alexandria which I have not seen and prefer some*

63 Treated in Chapter III.3.ii. and iii.

of these forms in my imagination (imaginarías formas) to others, I make a rational preference. The judgment of truth is shining vigorously from above, and it is firmly supported by the wholly unbiased rules of its own proper law, and even if it is somewhat veiled by a kind of cloud of bodily images (corporaliū imaginū), still it is not entangled and confused by them. (Trin. IX.6.10)⁶⁴

Both Augustine and Plotinus posited that the intellect, the highest part of the soul, was the image of God, as we shall see in the next section. The aspect of judging the images by the higher mind is more evident in the passage of Augustine, although this mental process was emphatically present in Plotinus' thought as well. It is implied in the quote from the *Enneads*, stating that physical images are secondary to intellect -that which perceives the images in their true intelligible manifestation.

Another similarity between Plotinus and Augustine is their explication of the relationship of the Ideas to the particulars as mentioned in terms of participation.⁶⁵ By participation in the Idea or *ratio*, each thing is what it is and how it is. The intellect as image of God is potentially capable to participate in the second divine Trinitarian Person, which includes his divine Ideas.⁶⁶ Augustine deems the *imago Dei* in his doctrine of creation as an image of the *Verbum Dei*.⁶⁷ He tends to state more often and more explicitly than Plotinus that the relationship of the intellect-image of God can be better characterized as dissemblance (*dissimilitudo*) than resemblance. Both regard the increasing one's resemblance or imaging of God as a means of spiritual growth and improvement. In Augustine's doctrines, the Son of God serves as exception to the general rule on images, as perfect Image of the Father. There is no difference between the Son and Father in the Trinity in substance, quality or value therefore they are equal in image and likeness.⁶⁸ In Plotinus' view, perfect imaging does not exist.

64 To illustrate the images produced in the mind, Augustine often uses the example of Carthage, which Augustine has seen before, and Alexandria, which he has never seen and thus must imagine how it must be (*Gen. litt* XII.6.15 and *Trin.*, e.g.: VIII.6.10). I selected this passage from *Trin.* for this comparison because it was succinct and it demonstrated more clearly Augustine's terminology.

65 Augustine on participation and/or resemblance: *Div. Qu.* 23, 51 and 74; *Soliloquiorum* II.20; *De quantitate animae* 13, 20 and 22; *Civ. Dei* XII.2; *Gen. litt. imperf.* 16.57 and 58; *De vera religione* 31.58, 34.62; *Retract.* I.26.32, *Sermo* I.8.9.38; See also G. Boersma, *Augustine's Early Theology of Image A Study in the Development of Pro-Nicene Theology* (Oxford: University Press, 2016) e.g.: 165-169; Gilson, *Introduction* 1969, 265-275; *ibid*, *History of Christian Philosophy*, 70-77, 276-285; R.A. Markus, "'Imago' and 'Similitudo' in Augustine", *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 10 (1964), 125-43. [V. Boland claims: "Augustine did not develop a philosophical account of participation." *Ideas in God According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, Source and Synthesis*, (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 46. Yet in my view, Augustine assimilated the Platonist's definition of participation and therefore found it self-explanatory. He did in fact explicate precisely the participation between the image of God and God throughout *Gen. litt* and *Trin.*]

66 *De Ideis*, *Gen. litt* V.13.29.

67 *Gen. litt. imperfect.* 61, *Trin.* IV.1.3, 3.5-6.

68 The difference between God the Father and God the Son is dealt with more extensively in *Trin.* e.g.: VII.3.5 (and *Conf.* XI.2-9). See also Chapter V.2.iv. Augustine explains in more detail in *Trin.* than in *Gen. litt* how Christ is our model: *Trin.* IV.1.3, 2.4, 3.5-6.

3. The Soul-intellect in Augustine's doctrine of the *Imago Dei* in *De genesi ad litteram*

3.i. Introduction *Gen. litt.* and the *Imago Dei*

The human soul as being created as *imago Dei* is mentioned throughout Augustine's entire oeuvre.⁶⁹ Apart from *Trin.*, where the image of God is given the most extensive treatment, it is mentioned in at least 150 texts between the years 388-427 in diverse contexts.⁷⁰ Considering all the works in which Augustine interprets Genesis 1:26-27, the passages in book III.19.29, 20.30-32 of *Gen. litt.* represent a decisive stage in his doctrine.⁷¹ His interpretation is not only especially rich in content but is also striking in its originality. The *imago Dei* treated here is from book III (in subsection 3.ii.), but also from book VI in the context of his exegesis of Adam and Eve (3.iv.) and then again from book XII in the context of his theory of three visions (4.iii). His first treatment of the *imago Dei* in III.20 deals with the notions of conversion, formation and illumination in acquiring divine knowledge, which are intricately related to his depiction of the origin of the soul in the angelic realm. The divine knowledge which humans can obtain correlates to angelic knowledge as well as to Augustine's thought on the afterlife in experiencing complete knowledge of God in a final vision. The second treatment of the *imago Dei* in the context of original sin involves Augustine's exegesis of the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Paradise as well as his notions of will *voluntas* and grace *gratia*.⁷² Although Augustine's association of the *imago Dei* with his conception of sin and original sin is not the main subject of this study, these concepts serve as significant background factors of Augustine's doctrine of *amor* and *caritas* in *Trin.*, which is of seminal importance for the response to the main inquiries of this study. The final treatment of the *imago Dei* in *Gen. litt.* concerns intellectual vision which is a particularly salient feature of Augustine's doctrine of the image as intellect. It will also serve an important reference in Augustine's explanation of the *imago Trinitatis* as well in the discussion of Augustine's indebtedness to Plotinus concerning the doctrine of the human intellect in Chapter VI.

69 Below is a list of primary sources in which Augustine treats the *imago Dei* in a significant way, i.e., in more than just a few lines. *Div. Qu.* I, 51 and 74. (*Div. Qu.* was written likely between 394-395); *Gen. litt. imperfectus* 16, 55-60, (written 393-394) and 16, 61-2, (added in 426-427); *De vera religione*. 43.81 (i.e. 26.49); *De beata vita; Soliloquiorum libri duo* 1.1.4; *Conf.* XIII.12.32 (and XIII.2.3-11,12-13) (written between 397-401); *Civ. Dei*: XIII,11-12, XI.2-3, 26-28) (approx. 418-419); *Gen. litt.* III.19.29-32, VI.19.30 to the end of the book (written before 410), VII.22.32-33, 24.35, XII.31.59 (before 416); *Trin.* VII-XV, (ca. 400-422). Hence, it appears that in the course of his life he continued to build onto his doctrine which culminated in *Trin.*

70 There are certainly differences which can be found in his articulation or his perspective, however the main lines of his doctrine remain consistent. As an example: the most significant change he made concerned the fall of Adam. It seems that in his early and middle phases of his life (up until the writing of *Gen. litt.*), he asserted that Adam's sin had caused the *imago Dei* to be lost. He later corrected himself in *Retract.* and *Trin.* J. Sullivan marks this change around 412 [*The Image of God: The Doctrine of St. Augustine and its Influence*, (Dubuque, 1963) 43]. See note 92.

71 Secondary literature on Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Dei*: P. Agaësse and A. Solignac, *BA* 48 (I) and 49 (II), «L'âme l'image de Dieu» (I. 629-633), «Les problèmes de l'âme dans le 'De genesi ad litteram'» (I. 695-697); I. Bochet, «*Imago*» in *A-L*, vol. 2, (2006), 507-520; M. T. Clark, «Image Doctrine» in: *AttA*, (1999), 440-442; T.A. Fay, «*Imago Dei* Augustine's Metaphysics of Man» in: *Antonianum* (49) 1974, 173-197; G. Boersma, *Augustine's Early Theology of Image, A Study in the Development of Pro-Nicene Theology* (Oxford: University Press, 2016) 224-266; A.G. Hamman, *L'homme image de Dieu, Essai d'une anthropologie chrétienne dans l'Eglise des cinq premiers siècles*, Relais-études 2, (Paris, 1987), 238-277; J. Lagouanère, *Intériorité et réflexivité dans la pensée de saint Augustin. Formes et genèse d'une conceptualisation*, (Paris/Turnhout: Brepols, 2012) Lagouanère's study is the most recent and provides a complete *status quaestionis* 438-448; Markus, «'Imago' and 'Similitudo'», 125-43; J. J. O'Meara, *The Creation of Man in St. Augustine's De genesi ad litteram*. (Villanova: University Press, 1980); Sullivan, *Image of God*.

72 *Gen. litt.* is not the most suitable work for studying Augustine's doctrine of the will. It is included here because it is useful for its context in the doctrine of the *imago Dei* within his exegesis of Genesis and his cosmology. *Trin.* explains *voluntas* more clearly in the context of the *imago Trinitatis*. Many other works give a more complete depiction of Augustine's notions of will and grace (such as *De libero arbitrio*, *Conf.* VIII.5.10-12, 8.20, 9.21 and 10.22 -related to Adam, 10.23-24).

3.ii. The *Imago Dei* in *Gen. litt.* III

3.ii.a. The *Imago Dei* as Intellect

In book III, Augustine arrives at the discussion of Genesis 1:26-27: ‘God said, “Let us make man in our image after our likeness...” 1:27: ‘God created man in his own image...’⁷³ He views these verses as the biblical indication of the creation of the human soul. The meaning of the words ‘our image’ in Gen. 1:26-27, he clarifies, must signify ‘to the image of the Trinity’ due to the apparent plurality of divine Persons as Creator here. However, he does not proceed to explain the image of God as an image of the Trinity here. He discusses the rest of the verse 27 and adds, that because man is endowed with reason, humans have authority over the animals (III.19.29). This is why the image referred to in Genesis can only signify the human reason faculty (*mens*, the mind, the intellect or intelligence) because it is only a rational soul (which animals do not have) which can resemble God.⁷⁴ Augustine then refers to a particular quote of Paul which is repeated throughout *Gen litt.* as well as *Trin.* This provides further justification of the superiority of human intelligence over animals and the rest of creation, which has to do with the highest part of the soul.

Hence, St. Paul says “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and **put on the new man**, who is being renewed unto the knowledge of God, according to the image of his Creator.”⁷⁵ By these words he shows wherein man has been created to the image of God, since it is not by any features of the body but by **a perfection of the intelligible order**, that is, of the mind when illuminated.’ (*Gen. litt.* III.20.30)⁷⁶ (translation: Taylor)

Hence Augustine correlates his definition of *imago Dei* as the highest part of the soul, the intellect, with Paul’s exegesis of the image of God as that part of the human being which undergoes spiritual renewal and transformation by acquiring knowledge of God. By obtaining this knowledge, one puts off one’s old self, the self which is identified with sin and the material life. For Augustine, the new self is identified with the immaterial region of the mind, the *imago Dei*. (This notion is emphasized in *Trin.*, where Augustine also identifies the *imago Dei* with the inner and true self.)

73 Gen. 1:26: ‘And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps over the earth. 27: So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.’ (<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+1%3A26-27&version=ESV>) April 2014.

74 *De Ideis* (2): ‘Now among the things which have been created by God, the rational soul is the most excellent of all, and it is closest to God when it is pure.’

75 The quote from Paul is Augustine’s own translation. The biblical references are: Eph. 4:21-24: ‘21: in assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22: to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23: and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24: and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.’/ Colos. 3:1: ‘If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2: Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3: For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4: When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. 5: Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6: On account of these the wrath of God is coming. 7: In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. 8: But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. 9: Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices 10: and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. 11: Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian slave free; but Christ is all, and in all.’ / Romans 12:2: ‘Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.’ Bible.org. <http://www.gnpcb.org/esv/search/?q=Ephesians+4>. May 2015

76 *Gen. litt.* III.20.30: *satis ostendens, ubi sit homo creatus ad imaginem Dei, quia non corporis liniamentis, sed forma quadam intelligibili mentis inluminatae.*

In the final sentence of the above quote, Augustine states that humans were created according to the image of God, not in the human figuration but in the illuminated soul (*mens*). By referring to the perfection of the intelligible order, he is implying the contemplation of the rational principles, the Ideas by the higher soul in a state of being illumined by the Creator (see *De Ideis* and section 4.ii.). By contemplating these, one becomes a more perfect image of God. In effect, Augustine is now integrating Paul's statements about the image into the context of his theory of Ideas and the notion of intellect, (which as was already noted, are indebted to Plotinus). Yet the 'illumined mind' refers to a complex but fascinating facet of his doctrine of the *imago Dei* which he initiates abruptly in chapter 31. The key word here is 'light' which refers to his exegesis of Gen. 1:3 'Let there be Light.' ⁷⁷

But first that light was created in which there was produced a knowledge of the Divine Word by whom it was created and the knowledge consisted precisely in this creature's turning from its unformed state to God who formed it and in its being created and formed. (Gen. litt III.20.30 (Taylor)

This aspect of his doctrine of creation was treated briefly in section 2.iv of this chapter within the context of his interpretation of Gen. 1:1 'And God made heaven and earth'. Augustine interpreted the making of 'heaven' as the creation of the angels, creatures of pure intelligence in the *caelum caeli*, the "intelligible" heaven in the first moment of the creation act. We recall that this is where he designated the origin of the human soul.⁷⁸ Now in III.20.31, he binds this exegesis of 'heaven' and the origin of the soul with his exegesis of Gen. 1:26-27, the *imago Dei*. The result is that the human intellect in its acquisition of pure knowledge is clearly related to the angels. In order to clearly follow Augustine's line of thinking in these passages we must reiterate Augustine's interpretation of this first day of creation and the *caelum caeli* and investigate this more thoroughly. His interpretation has to do with the angels turning to the Creator, contemplating the Ideas, being enlightened with his Wisdom and becoming 'formed': *conversio*, *illuminatio* and *formatio*.⁷⁹

3.ii. b. The *Imago Dei* and the Angels

In the first moment of creation, the intelligible foundation was established for all existing things, which will later come into existence in the second phase. In this initial, eternal moment, the creation act began with the making of a realm of beings of pure intelligence and intellect designated as the

77 Augustine's treatment of the creation of Light, equated with intelligible heaven, the angels and the soul in *Gen. litt*, recall much of what Augustine expounds in *Conf.*, yet contains some differences. See Agaësse-Solignac BA 48, 581-584; 586-588. A. Solignac, «*Caelum Caeli*» in BA 14, (*Confessions* XII) 592-598.; In *Gen. litt* III.20.30-31, Augustine establishes and reinforces the relationship between the human soul as *imago Dei* and the celestial realm. See *Conf.* XII.2.2, 8.8, 9.9, 11.12, 13.16, 15.19-22, 16.23 and XIII.2.2-3; 3.4, 4.5, 8.9, 16.19-21 and 23; *Gen. litt* book I.3.7, 5.10, 9.15-17, 17.32; book II.8.16-19; book III.20.30-31; book IV.22.35; *Civ. Dei* XI.9.1; *Trin.* XIV.17.23 and 18.24.

The relationship between the soul and the angelic realm is also evident in Augustine's teaching of the afterlife and resurrection, when mankind will become a perfect image of God, attain intellectual vision -the same knowledge as the angels- and become equal to them (see point 3.iv.d on Augustine's eschatology). *Gen. litt* IV.23.40, 24.41, 25.42, V.20.38, VI.19.30, 21.30, XII.35.68, 36.69; *Conf.* XII.13.16; *Trin.* XIV.19.25 and 26, XV.23 and 24; Cf: L. Zwollo, "St. Augustine on the Soul's Divine Experience: *Imago Dei* and *Visio Intellectualis* from book 12 of *De genesi ad litteram libri XII*", *Studia Patristica* 2013, volume 70, 85-91.

78 He also equated the *caelum caeli* with the destination of saints after their physical death: the Heavenly City Jerusalem (*Civ. Dei* XI.7).

79 Cf: A. Solignac, «27. *Conversio, Formatio*» BA 14, 613-614 (which also explains this phenomenon in *Gen. litt*), «Origine plotinienne de l'idée 'conversion'» (*ibid*, BA 14, 614-617); Vannier, *Creatio, conversion, formatio*.

angels or *creatura intelligibilis*.⁸⁰ It was at the creation of light, that the beings of pure intellect and the soul came into existence. Augustine says that this realm was made directly by the *Verbum Dei* (thus not by the *Verbum's Rationes*) which means that the human soul was directly made by the *Verbum* as well.⁸¹ This also explains the higher status of the soul in the order of created things (*Gen. litt* I.4.9; II.8.16-19).

Of importance here is Augustine's description of how this realm came to be a realm of pure intelligence. It was not only because it was the first creature and therefore closest to God's own intelligence and like God Himself, a purely immaterial realm. It was because the beings in this realm acquired a certain knowledge or intelligence at the time of their creation, which Augustine described in terms of *conversio* and *formatio*. Initially, the light Beings or the angels were created without form and in an imperfect state. By being called back to the Creator (I.3.7, I.4.9) by the Creator Himself, they turned (*conversio*) to the Light of their source, the *Verbum*.

And so, when Scripture declares, God said "Let there be..." we may understand this as an immaterial utterance of God in His eternal Word, as the Word recalls His imperfect creature to Himself, so that it may not be formless but may be formed...In this conversion and formation, the (LZ: angelic) creature in its own way imitates the Divine Word, the Son of God, who is eternally united with the Father in the perfect likeness and equal essence by which He and the Father are one. (Gen. litt I.4.9.)

In this illumination, triggered by their conversion, the angels were able to 'see', acquire knowledge, thus their perfection and formation. The latter consisted of two important aspects (*Gen. litt* II.8.16-19): (i.) the awareness that the origin and cause of the world was a Divine Creator, and (ii.) the knowledge of the Ideas in the Creator's Mind (*in mente divina*) by which the world was made, by having seen them or contemplated them themselves.⁸² The angels thereby obtained a perfect understanding of the Creator, as well as of the creation act and mankind's future destiny. The angels performed these intellectual acts simultaneously, in accordance with the simultaneity of the creation act, the *prima conditio*, which took place in one moment in eternity (IV.31.48, 33-51). Here Augustine is describing a perfect intellectual vision (*visio Dei*) which human souls cannot obtain in this life but are destined for in the afterlife at the time of resurrection (XII.36.69. See note 77).

80 Agaësse-Solignac indicate a change in Augustine's thinking in his treatment of the *caelum caeli* (BA 48, 586-587) They comment that in *Conf.*, his treatment of the angelic realm resembles that of an hypostasis (*Nous*). In that sense, the Plotinian influence was more evident in *Conf.* than in *Gen. litt*. On the angelic realm in *Gen. litt* I. 9.17: *la vie intellectuelle en soi (ipsa est intellectualis vita)* does not designate a Hypostasis or «an intellectual realm» in the same way as *Conf.* XII.11.12; but more of a metaphysical condition, a degree of nature (e.g. *Gen litt* II.8.16). «*Caelum caeli* dans le '*De Genesi ad litteram*' (BA 48, 586-588). Agaësse-Solignac's conclusion does not seem entirely correct to me. Augustine's exposition of the intellectual angelic realm in *Gen. litt* corresponds in many ways to Plotinus' notion of *Nous*. Yet this realm surely cannot be likened to a hypostasis. In *Gen. litt* Augustine stresses more the angels' perfect contemplation of the Ideas. This aspect is apparently absent in his rendition in *Conf.* In this way, the Plotinian influence would be more evident in *Gen. litt* than in *Conf.*

81 Augustine expresses this more directly in *Trin.* II.8.4.

82 Augustine describes angelic knowledge in: *Gen. litt* IV.23.40, 24.41, 25.42, V.20.38, XII.35.68, 36.69. Especially in book IV, this knowledge is explained in terms of 'evening' and 'morning', as mentioned in the creation story in Genesis. 'Evening knowledge' is self-knowledge, the acknowledgement of one's own proper nature and dissimilarity with God's Being (IV 22.39). It also includes direct knowledge of creatures as they exist. 'Morning knowledge' or Light is obtained when the angels turn to the Creator, the *Verbum*, and are formed by the unchangeable Truth. This entails acquiring knowledge of the Ideas, the causal principles of all creatures; this precedes all other knowledge due to its origin in the *Verbum*. Morning knowledge (light) also consists of praising the Creator. For the angels it is always 'evening and morning' because they exist in the realm of eternity.

Acquiring their wisdom, the angels became ‘created Wisdom’ (*sapientia facta*) by the *Verbum Dei*, who himself is ‘uncreated or Engendered Wisdom’ (*sapientia genita*). Augustine indicates that Heaven first existed as a Form in the Creator which was then objectified as the spiritual creature itself. Then the intelligible world was made known to the angels. Thereby at their formation, they became an image of ‘Uncreated Wisdom’. The angels imitate unceasingly the *Verbum* by contemplating their source ‘*which always and unchangeably adheres to the Father*’ or ‘*who always adheres to the Father in complete likeness and equality of Being.*’ (*Gen. litt* I.4.9).

The angels may then be perfectly formed but they are not divine in Augustine’s view. At any rate they are closer to the divine than humans in the physical world. The human soul which is neither divine (*Gen. contra Man.* II.8.11, etc.), does not possess this perfection and never will in this lifetime. This has to do with the fact that humans possess a physical body which is bound to the dimensions of time and space. Their perfection will not take place in one flash in eternity as with the angels, rather it will occur in a process of development throughout the course of their lifetimes as well as in the afterlife. What the human soul does possess from the angels, -by virtue of the fact that the human soul originated in the angelic realm- is the same movement of conversion and formation which enabled the angels to receive their ultimate formation and perfection as creatures. This was also instilled in the human soul at its creation and is thus present in every human soul. Augustine’s interpretation of heaven as the angelic realm of existence explains why the human soul is a rational, intellectual creature. It is the only creature who is related not only to the first created light in the *caelum caeli* where the Word of God and His uncreated Wisdom is perfectly known, but also in a direct manner to the Light of the Word and his uncreated Wisdom, as its source of divine knowledge. This clarifies why Augustine associates the *imago Dei* with the realm of pure intelligence in *Gen. litt* III.20.31, which is the highest region of the soul, the intellect:

This explanation (LZ: of the intellectual creation ‘heaven’) is borne out in the case of the creation of man, “Let us make man to our own image and likeness...” “And God made man to the image of God.” For the nature of this creature is intellectual as is the light previously mentioned and so its creation is identified with its knowing the Divine Word through whom it was made. ...For the nature of this creature is intellectual, as is the light previously mentioned and so its creation is identified with knowing the Divine Word through whom it was made...man is rational and is made perfect by this very knowledge of which there is question. As for those things however that were not created in that knowledge, because they were being created either as bodies or as non-rational souls, knowledge of them was first of all made in the intellectual creation by the Word... the knowledge of them was now made in that nature which was able to know this in the Word of God beforehand. (III.20.31)

Augustine confirms in this passage the immateriality of the human soul and the nature of the soul being intellectual, as being similar to that primeval light. Augustine speaks here also of the complete knowledge of creation of the angels who witnessed the whole of the creation act which humans are later destined to acquire: contemplating perfectly the *Verbum*, seeing the divine Ideas and understanding completely the metaphysical principles of creation. This is why he underlines the intellect’s capacity for obtaining divine knowledge and its importance as one of the main attributes of the highest part of the soul. Yet humans in their physical existence are faced with a different set of circumstances than angels ‘*For after original sin, man is renewed in the knowledge of God according to the image of God according to the image of his Creator.* (Col. 3:10)’ (*Gen. litt* III.20.32). His mentioning of original sin here is significant: the human soul, after being born into a body, is then

confronted with Adam's disobedience to God, which is alleviated by consciously striving to become a better image and obtaining divine knowledge. This topic of original sin will be further elucidated in subsection iv.

3.iii. Synthesis: Augustine's Doctrine of the Image of God

Let us briefly review the main points treated so far in Augustine's doctrine of *imago Dei* which will be useful for studying of the rest of his doctrine. The human soul is the only creature in the visible, physical realm which is potentially immortal. It is incorporeal, especially in its highest part, the rational soul or the intellect. The lower part of the soul is attached to the physical body. Subject to change, affected by things of time and space, just like other things or living beings, the soul as a whole cannot as such be eternal or divine, in spite of the fact that her highest part had been created in the image or likeness of God. Because the *imago Dei* can know God and acquire wisdom by contemplating the Ideas, it is distinguished from the lower soul, as well as from other creatures and things in the visible world. It is also set apart from these in that it is able to resemble God by obtaining divine Wisdom and become a perfect image of God.

By virtue of its origin in the *caelum caeli*, an intelligible region of pure intellect, the human intellect has a strong affinity with the holy angels, which it strives to imitate. Like the angels, the human intellect is able to turn to the *Verbum*, contemplate Him, thereby receive illumination and formation. With its capacity to acquire divine knowledge and participate in the divine, the human image undergoes its formation in the dimension of time in a gradual manner. The angels, on the other hand, received their formation in one flash in the realm of eternity in the first phase of the creation act. The angels are images of Christ and accordingly, imitate the Creator, *Verbum Dei*, the Son of God, who is in turn, a perfect Image of the Father and contemplates Him eternally and unfailingly. The human intellect is an image of the Creator as well. Augustine applied the term 'Divine Wisdom' to the Creator; yet 'divine wisdom', which humans are able to attain, is associated with becoming aware of the Ideas in God's mind. Thus, Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Dei* underscores the importance of acquiring wisdom or knowledge, by contemplating the Ideas, which is essential to becoming a perfect image of God and ascending to God. In sum, the groundwork of Augustine's doctrine of the image of God in *Gen. litt.* has an epistemological, redemptive character. This will also be evident in the upcoming sections when Augustine's doctrine will be further explained as to what it entails to be an image of God or what the intellect is further capable of.

3.iii.a. The Influence of Plotinus

Many Plotinian concepts in this exposition were noted in Augustine's doctrine of creation and the human intellect. A few of the most striking correspondences will be discussed here briefly. The first is Plotinus' depiction of how the Intellect came into being.⁸³ The divine Intellect came into existence as an 'utterance'-a *Logos*, or a trace or an Image of the One (for example in *Enn.* V.1.7.1-5, 17.39). Augustine also described the *Verbum Dei* as coming into existence by God the Father speaking, becoming his Word and also his Perfect Image (*Gen. litt.* I.2.6, 4.9, 5.11). After coming forth from the One, the *Nous* had two stages of development: in the first, it was inchoate and longed to know its source. It turned (*epistrophê*) to the One to contemplate it. Subsequently, it received its properties of pure Thought and the intelligible world.⁸⁴ A similar process of formation took place in the *caelum caeli*

83 How the *Nous* came into existence was treated in Chapter III.2.ii.b. 'The Divine Intellect' and Chapter III.4.ii.a 'The *Nous*' Relationship to the One.'

84 e.g.: *Enn.* V.3.11, V.1.6-7, V.2.1.

in Augustine's cosmology: the angels who were created of light turned to the higher light, the Creator, to contemplate Him and thereby received their formation.⁸⁵ In Augustine's doctrine, the *caelum caeli* was an immaterial realm of pure intellect; the same characteristics can be applied to Plotinus' conception of the *Nous*. Yet, contrary to Plotinus' *Nous*, Augustine's notion of the angelic realm was not deemed divine. Instead, it was considered creaturely (which excluded divinity). In sum, Augustine's view of angels as well as the *Verbum* bears similarities as such to Plotinus' second Hypostasis, in the depiction of his contemplating the One, the origin of his own Light.⁸⁶

Another example in Plotinus is the divine Intellect which reproduced itself by splitting itself up into individual intellects, thereby bringing into existence the human intellect (*Enn.* II.4.5.5-8). A parallel situation can be found in Augustine's placement of the origin of the soul in the *caelum caeli*-the pure intellectual realm of Light (*Gen. litt.* III.20.30-31), from which individual souls somehow came forth.^{87 88} Plotinus stated:

The remaining possibility, then, is for the soul to have received an intelligent life, a trace of the life of Intellect; for the true realities are there. But the life and activity of Intellect is the first light shining primarily for itself and an outshining upon itself, at once illuminating and illuminated (LZ: by the One), the truly intelligible, both thinker and thought...It is such kind that it apprehends itself more clearly, but we apprehend it by means of it; by reasonings of this kind our soul also is led back up to it, as its life is a reflection and likeness of it... (Enn. V.3.8.35-39,...44-49).

This passage involves the illumination of the human intellect *nous* by its demiurge *Nous*, of which it is an image or trace. Plotinus states that all its intelligence- its perception and apprehension of the intelligible- is derived from the *Nous*. For that reason, it is always drawn back to the Intellect in the desire to resemble it. This indeed parallels the relationship between the image of God-intellect in Augustine's view being illuminated by the *Verbum Dei*. Its whole existence, as well as its entire knowledge or wisdom, is a gift from the Creator. In Plotinus' teachings, the movement of conversion *epistrophê*, receiving the illumination and formation of the *Nous*⁸⁹ is incorporated in the human intellect as well, in imitating the divine Intellect contemplating the One (or even the Ideas). Augustine

85 On the Plotinian influence on Augustine's conception of *caelum caeli*: the conception of the *Nous*: A. Solignac, «*Caelum Caeli*» in *BA* 14, 592-598. See also note 78. Solignac cites *Enn.* V.3.8 and II.4.5 as possible influences on Augustine's doctrine of illumination (p. 595).

86 On how Augustine assimilated the characteristics of Plotinus' *Nous* and the intelligible world for his doctrine of the *Verbum Dei*, see Chapter VI.2.iv. Also e.g.: Zwollo, "Plotinus' *Logos*", 249-250; and Fattal, *Plotin chez Augustin*, 83-88.

87 As mentioned earlier, the origin of the soul was a subject which Augustine said he could not entirely explain, as he apparently found no scriptural evidence to support the notion of individual souls deriving from this 'conglomerate soul' (*Gen. litt.* VII.24.35). In book VII, Augustine ruminates on the origin of the soul attempting to reconcile biblical notions as the life of the body breathed into Adam's face by God in Genesis. In the end, he concludes that the soul was certainly not a *creatio ex nihilo* nor consubstantial with God (VII.28.43). He returns to this matter throughout book X (e.g. X.5.8) and ends up defending his argument that the soul is completely incorporeal against the North African Christian thinker Tertullian (*ca.* 155-240).

88 Another question to be raised here regarding the influence of Plotinus concerns Augustine's assertion in *Gen. litt.* III.20.30-31 that the human soul was created as an intellectual entity on the angelic plane: is this a kind of Plotinian World Soul before it was divided up into individual souls? Augustine seems to accept the notion of a World-Soul in *De immortalitate animae* 15.24; *De quantitate animae* 32.68; *De ordine* 2.11.30 and *De musica* 6.15.13. See also his commentary in *Retract.* 1.11.4; Cf: J. Rist, *Augustine, Ancient Thought Baptized*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1994); R.J. Teske, "The World Soul and Time in St. Augustine" *Augustinian Studies* 14 (1983) 77-94; R.J. O'Connell, *St Augustine's Early Theory of Man AD 386-391* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap/Harvard Press, 1968); A.H. Armstrong, "Spiritual or Intelligible Matter in Plotinus and St. Augustine", *Augustinus Magister*, I, (1954) 277-283, 280; J. Pépin, "Recherches sur le sens et les origines de l'expression '*caelum caeli*' dans le livre XII in *Confessions* de saint Augustin", *Archivum Latinitatis Mediaevi. Bulletin de Congé*, 23 (1953), 185-274.

89 The Plotinian influence on Augustine's notion of *conversio* is discussed by Vannier, *Creatio-Conversio-Formatio*, 11-14. As Plotinian sources she cites: *Enn.* II.4.5.34 (light originating from other light); III.4.1.8-11, III.8.3.11 and III.8.4.

depicts a similar process: the human image turns to contemplate its exemplar, the *Verbum*, and in doing so, it contemplates the Creator's Ideas (subsequently imitating the angels as well). In this way, it becomes formed.

Another parallel in the *Enneads* is the idea that the human *nous*, by contemplating the Intellect's Ideas and becoming illuminated by the divine *Nous*, will progressively become godlike, a state in which the soul realizes its true self. We see this echoed in Augustine as well: by acquiring divine knowledge, the image is gradually re-formed, and is transformed to the truer and more Christ-like self.

The influence of Plotinus on Augustine's doctrine of contemplation and epistemology will be dealt with more extensively in Chapter VI.3.ii.a. In Augustine's doctrine of image of God in *Gen. litt.*, the intellect is depicted as image of Christ, the Creator, the second Trinitarian person (parallel to the second Hypostasis of Plotinus). Yet it is truly an image of the Holy Trinity. In Chapter V we will see how Augustine, following Plotinus, delineated the imaging of the *imago Dei* with the whole Trinitarian Godhead (parallel to Plotinus' depiction of the human soul's imaging of the three regions of All Soul and ultimately the three Hypostases.) In *Trin.*, he will also explicate further the imaging of the human intellect of the *Verbum*, in particular his life on Earth.

In the entire treatment of the *imago Dei* in *Gen. litt.* III.20.30, Augustine was intricately integrating verses from the apostle Paul's letters with Plotinian philosophy. Paul's statements which inspired Augustine's doctrine of the image of God were those such as '*Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, who is being renewed unto the knowledge of God, according to the image of his Creator.*'⁹⁰ '*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God-what is good and acceptable and perfect.*' (Romans 12:2). They seem to fit seamlessly into Plotinus' thinking. Augustine's critique of Platonism in *Conf.* VII-VIII was that they knew where God was (in other words, that He was immaterial, transcendent and above the human intellect) but they did not know how to get there. In other words, in his mind, they missed essential anthropological insights, such as the weakness of the human will, and how to amend one's sinful nature -through the grace of Christ. Christ-as Incarnation of the second divine Trinitarian person- was of course completely missing in their philosophy. The knowledge of a divine healer who had himself suffered under the same conditions as humans was indispensable for Augustine in order to ascend to God. This brings us to the next aspect of Augustine's doctrine of the human image.

3.iv. *Imago Dei*, Original Sin and Human Nature

iv.a. Introduction

Having established the origin of the soul in the realm of the angels in *Gen. litt.* III.20.31, Augustine confirmed that this soul signifies the *imago Dei*, the intellect which was created as a causal principle *ratio*. Then he referred to his exegesis of Adam and Eve as having committed original sin. '*For after original sin, man is renewed in the knowledge of God according to the image of his Creator. Similarly, before he grew old by sin, he was created in that knowledge in which he would subsequently be renewed.*' This interesting quote requires elucidation. To begin with, Augustine treats original sin further up in *Gen. litt.* VI.19.30, etc., where he continues expounding his doctrine of the *imago Dei* in the context of the fall of Adam and Eve and his eschatology. Here, Augustine utilizes the words

90 The quote from Paul is Augustine's own translation of Eph. 4:23-24, Col. 3:10 in *Gen. litt.* III.20.30. Other biblical references are: Eph. 4:22-24: '*...put off your old self, 23: and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24: and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*' (Col. 3:10): '*and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in the knowledge after the image of its creator.*'

ESV Bible.org. <http://www.gnpcb.org/esv/search/?q=Ephesians+4>. May 2015.

of Paul concerning the *imago Dei* and his idea of the ‘first and second Adam’ (See note 100 on ‘the second Adam’). Because Augustine’s further treatment of sin in *Gen. litt* is laden with complexities and inquiries which are not relevant here, our understanding will be facilitated with a brief summary of his doctrine from different books in *Gen. litt.*, different exegesis of Genesis or *Trin.*, where the same general conceptions are stated more coherently.

3.iv.b. Original Sin and the Human Will ⁹¹

The first humans were created as images of God, but because of their disobedience to God, Augustine claims, their image was lost (*Gen. litt* VI.27.38).⁹² Originally created as immortals, their immortality, too, was lost (VI.20.31). Augustine sees Adam’s behavior as a reflection of universal human nature; an inherent inclination towards sin. God’s punishment of Adam at his expulsion from paradise applies to the whole human race living in post-paradisiacal times. Concerning the curse of God as punishment in Gen. 3:17-18, Augustine writes: ‘*But if anything is certain, nobody may escape this sentence. The very fact after all, that everyone born into this life finds the search of truth impeded by the perishable body, is that what is meant by the toil and grief which the man gets from earth...*’ (*Gen. contra Man* II.20.30). This passage describes God’s curse as the cause of mankind’s hardships: that is, the human tendency to persistently search for ultimate divine truth in physical existence which is a futile pursuit.

In *Conf.* VII-VIII, Augustine explicated the source of sin and evil in the world as primarily in the human mind, namely the will.⁹³ He emphasized the errors of the Platonists by arguing that the human soul is not capable of keeping her concentration on God for any length of time (while ascending to God) because the human will is weak and requires God’s grace in order to stay focused upon Truth and to consciously carry out God’s will. Here, as well, he emphasized man’s propensity for sin and for the inability to remain focused on God. In *Civ. Dei*, Augustine described man’s debility after original sin, among other things, his weak will, as no longer having sufficient rational control over the body (XIV.10, 16-17, 23-24). As a result of their disobedience, Adam and Eve became ashamed of their genitals, of their sexual lust, the latter of which now competed for the dominion of their wills. Sin, however, according to Augustine, did not derive exclusively from the fact that Adam had a physical body. Augustine illustrated the sinfulness of mankind by the general inclination to turn away (*aversio Dei*) from their relationship with the Creator or forget

91 Literature utilized for Augustine’s doctrine of will: C. Harrison, *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity*, (Oxford: University Press, 2000), 88-106; J. Rist, “Augustine on Free Will and Destination” in: Markus, *Augustine A Collection*, 218-252; *ibid*, Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized, Ch. 5: Will, Love and Right Action, 148-202; *ibid*, *Augustine Deformed, Love, Sin and Freedom in the Western Moral Tradition*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2014) Chapters 1-3; M. Djuth, “Will”, *AttA*, 881-885; P. Rigby “Original Sin”, *AttA*, 607-614; S.E. Beyers, *Perception, Sensibility, and Moral Motivation in Augustine, A Stoic-Platonic synthesis*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2003) 88-99; C. Horn, “Anthropologie” in: V. H. Drecoll (ed.), *Augustin Handbuch*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007); *ibid*, *Augustinus*, (München: C.H. Beck, 1995, 2013) “Der Wille als Amor”, 132-137 (1995).

92 Augustine corrected himself in *Retract.* II.24.2, emphasizing that the image could indeed never be lost, only disfigured. In *Trin.* he stated the image had been deformed by the sin originally committed by Adam and not lost. I think the change of terms -from lost to deformed -had to do with a re-consideration of his own doctrine. In none of his works, did he elaborate on what the consequences would be if the image were capable of being lost. In his doctrine of sin, he stressed that everyone had the inclination to sin, even angels and saints. Adam and Eve ‘fell’ and therefore all people exist in a fallen state. But no one is entirely lost. There is always opportunity for redemption. See note 70.

93 Treated in Chapter II.1.ii.c and e.

or even deny their dependence on God.⁹⁴ Humans therefore do not have the strength to do what they truly long to do (as stated in Rom. 7.19-20). Even though a person desires to remain attached to God, to carry out God's will, to do good for their neighbor or for mankind as a whole, most people end up choosing instead what is good only for themselves and gratifying primarily one's own needs (for example in *Trin.* XII.10.15). This will be discussed further in the next point on sin and love. Augustine's doctrine of sin and original sin is thus deeply ingrained in his view of the human will and consequently with the post-lapsarian circumstances of the *imago Dei*. Noteworthy in this context however is his exegesis of the *imago Dei* in *Gen. litt.* (III.20.30-32), which was just treated. In the movement of *conversio Dei*, turning to God, Augustine demonstrated what he perceived as a good functioning human 'will' -as focused on God. Augustine's depiction of the good will has to do with 'being free to choose'. 'Freedom' is for Augustine a state in which one is liberated from sin and evil. Yet the only way to achieve this state is to act while consciously engaged with God.⁹⁵

As is evident here, Augustine's conception of the human will is a complex feature of his anthropology with various layers of meanings depending upon the context in which he treats it. In *Trin.* he describes the best image of the Holy Trinity as a collaboration of three factors in the human mind in the state of remembering, understanding and willing or loving God. As such, he ties his notion of will *voluntas* into the conception of love *amor*, as in equivocating 'desiring and willing'. Additionally, love and will were both deemed as immaterial substances of the mind.⁹⁶ These are important aspects in *Trin.*, but in the Genesis commentaries, the equality of love and will is not discussed, at least not in the context of the *imago Dei*. It is useful to recall here the objectives of this research: to ultimately focus on the Augustine's *imago Trinitatis* and love and knowledge as factors in their relationship to these same themes in Plotinian philosophy. Hence, Augustine's doctrine of *voluntas* will not be explored in the comparison with Plotinus,⁹⁷ only his terms for the element 'love' will require our attention. Moreover, Augustine's concept of *voluntas* is an intricate issue with numerous difficulties which go beyond the scope of this research. For that reason, we will proceed further.

3.iv.c. Sin and Pride in the Context of Love and Knowledge

In *Conf.*, Augustine showed that the ascent to God demanded knowledge of human nature and the psychological factors which obstruct the faithful from becoming a better image of God or more godlike. One of which was the sin of pride, which was, according to Augustine's exegesis of Genesis, Adam's first sin (*Gen. litt.* XI.13.17-15.19). 'Next, as is the way with pride, he (LZ: Adam) doesn't plead guilty to being the woman's accomplice, but instead puts all the blame for his own fault on the woman...And when the woman is questioned she puts the blame on the serpent.' (*Gen. contra Man.* II.17.25). Adam's pride prevented him from seeing his own wrongdoings, blaming the other even though he himself sinned. His arrogance was also prevalent in his wish to become God by obtaining

94 'So then they (LZ: Adam and Eve) hide themselves from themselves, in order to be troubled with miserable errors after forsaking the light of truth, which they themselves were definitely not. The human soul, after all, can participate in truth, but Truth itself is God, unchanging above the soul. So then, turn away if you will from the Truth and turn to yourself, and exult in your own seemingly free movements rather than in being directed and enlightened by God; but you will be plunged in the darkness of falsehood, since whoever speaks falsehood is speaking from what is his own. And so you will be troubled in that way, and illustrate the truth of the prophet's words: My soul is troubled at myself (Ps. 42.26).' (*Gen. contra Man.* II.16.24)

95 Rist on Augustine's free will ("Free Will"). As Rist explains, Augustine's conception of *voluntas* is not the equivalent to that which we refer to today, the will as a 'faculty of the mind'.

96 J. Rist, "Free Will", 218-252; *ibid*, Ancient Thought Baptized, Ch. 5: "Will, Love and Right Action", 148-202; *ibid*, Augustine Deformed, Chapters 1-3; S. E. Beyers, *Perception, Sensibility*, 88-95; Harrison, *Fractured Humanity*, (2000), 88-106.

97 See the publications of Rist and Beyers in the note above in which the Stoic influence on Augustine's and Plotinus' notion of will is delineated.

the knowledge of the tree of life. In this way, Augustine explained, Adam was 'in love with his own superiority'. Hence Adam's self-centeredness and egoism were essentially one and the same with original sin. This is also explained further in his distinction of two kinds of loves in *Gen. litt.* XI.15.20, likewise in the context of Adam and Eve's sins. The first kind of love is holy, social- '*taking thought of common good because of companionship in the upper regions*'. It is calm, peaceable, content with God's truth; friendly and desiring for those close to us what one desires for oneself. It is allied with Justice and Goodness which manifest in the realm of the angels. The other love consists of that which is unclean, private, turbulent, rebellious, greedy for praise from others, jealous, desiring to exercise authority over one's neighbor and his possessions. Both loves are manifest in all humans, just as the earthly and heavenly cities (as expounded in *Civ. Dei*) occur in a mixed fashion in our world.⁹⁸

The themes love and knowledge also concur in the framework of his exegesis of Gen. 3.24, the expulsion from paradise, where Augustine further illustrates general human behavior exemplified by Adam and Eve. '*So God set the cherubim and the flaming sword which turns -or in one word- the flaming whirling sword to guard the way to the tree of life*'. (*Gen. contra Man.* II.23.35). Augustine interprets the meaning of 'cherubim' in Hebrew allegorically, in that it signifies 'fullness of knowledge'. This recalls his exegesis of the *imago Dei* in *Gen. litt.* (III.20.30-32), the perfect knowledge of God of the angels as a result of their formation in the first phase of creation. Likewise, he underlined there the importance of divine knowledge, the same knowledge which the angels had acquired, for the renewal of the human soul or image. 'Flaming whirling sword' from the quote above is understood by Augustine as obstacles, such as: '*...temporal punishments and pains, since time goes whirling and spinning along. The tree of life is being guarded by fullness of knowledge and the flaming sword... Yes, but putting up with troubles is something that practically everyone who is stretching out to the tree of life has to undergo in this life, while the fullness of knowledge seems to fall to the lot of the far fewer people.*' (*Gen. contra Man.* II.22.36.)

Thus, the fullness of knowledge is what Adam and Eve failed to attain because of their disobedience to God. Consequently, Augustine says, humans will neither attain this in this lifetime; at the end of time, it *will* be attained, yet only after enduring the troubles of this life. What is also significant here is the continuation of this passage in which he equates the restoration of the fullness of knowledge by means of loving God and one's neighbor, quoting Paul and Matthew.

*"But the fullness of the law is charity" (Rom. 13:10). And let us see this same love in that twin commandment: You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart and your whole soul and with your whole mind and You shall love your neighbor as yourself; on these two commandments hangs the whole law and the prophets (Mt. 22:37.39-40). Then we can take it without the slightest hesitation that one does not only come to the tree of life through the flaming, whirling sword, that is, through the endurance of temporal troubles, but also through the **fullness of knowledge, that is through charity**, because "if I do not have charity, he says, I am nothing" (1 Cor 13:2). (*Gen. contra Man.* II.22.36)*

We see here how Augustine introduced the aspect of love and knowledge into his doctrine of the *imago Dei* in his Genesis commentaries, although he did so in a remote manner. In Chapter V, we will

98 *Conf.* XIII.9.10: 'My weight is my love; wherever I am carried, my love is carrying me. By your gift we are set on fire and carried upwards; we grow red hot and ascend. We climb "the ascent in our heart" (Ps. 83:6) and sing "the song of steps" (Ps. 119:1). Lit by your fire, your good fire, we grow red hot and ascend, as we move upwards "to the peace of Jerusalem" (Ps. 121:1). There we will be brought to our place by a good will, so that we want nothing but to stay there forever.' (Chadwick)

see how Augustine will draw the theme of love to the foreground of his doctrine as a major element of the human mind, not just identifying it with sin and false pride.

3.iv.d. *Imago Dei*: Eschatology and the Resurrection

To deal with Augustine's eschatology, a concise summary of what had been treated so far is indispensable. According to Augustine, the sins which humans inherited from our original ascendants were what assured them of unhappy and broken lives. Human existence was tainted not only by the sin of Adam but also by the curse of God at their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Dei* instructed the inevitability of human sinning in their lives on earth which led to unrest and discontent. His doctrine of sin here served as another one of his explanations for *unde malum*, the source of evil in the world, in continuation of *Conf.* VII-VIII. Although people today did not commit the sins of Adam, we are still the inheritors of his sin and continue to commit the same errors. They are propagated into posterity by imitating Adam's faulty nature: choosing to protect oneself, denying the blame for one's own sins, denying the responsibility for the evil one perpetuated. Augustine included in commentaries on Genesis over-estimation of oneself, an exclusive self-orientation and pursuing unhealthy loves. Recalling again *Conf.* VII-VIII, there he criticized Manichaeans and Platonists for their failure to see the importance of acknowledging one's sins, to confess them to the Lord and take responsibility for one's participation in evil. Thus, at the time of Adam and Eve's fall, the image of God was damaged and remained damaged ever since. He stated that we may be able to damage our image of God by ourselves but we cannot restore it alone.⁹⁹ A gradual renewal of the image (the highest region of the soul) was possible in this life through the grace of Christ (*Gen. litt* IX.18.33). For this reason, Augustine demonstrated how the healed will functioned: by *conversio*, *formatio* and *illuminatio*: by orienting the mind to the light of the Eternal Word, receiving divine knowledge, truth and wisdom by which the image and its resemblance to God can be restored little by little. Progressive renewal of the deformed image occurred by one's conscious practice of turning daily as much as possible to Christ.

Now we arrive finally at Augustine's eschatology. This may be brief, yet it is of utmost importance to his doctrine of the *Imago Dei* in *Gen. litt* and *Trin.*: the complete renewal of the image is highly unlikely in this lifetime. The renewal and retrieval of the soul's immortality, as well as the re-formation or re-creation of the image will occur at the time of resurrection in the afterlife by the second Adam, Christ, the *Verbum Dei*.¹⁰⁰ At that time, the human images will attain a complete vision of God and become equal to the angels (*Gen. litt* IV.23.40, 24.41) in that they will possess the same knowledge (VII.21.30). What this vision of God entails exactly is treated in section 4 'The Ascent...' in Augustine's depiction of intellectual vision.

99 'It cannot reform itself in the way it was able to deform itself.' 'And thus the image begins to be reformed by him who formed it in the first place.' (*Trin.* XIV.16.22)

100 *Gen. litt* VI.19.30-24.35. These statements, inspired by Paul, concern the first man, Adam, who was made as an ensouled body, the body being made from dust of the earth. The second Adam, being of pure spirit and from heaven, is Christ. Paul's words are: 'And just as we have put on the image of the earthly one, so let us also put on the image of him who is from heaven.' (1 Cor. 15:44-49). Augustine interprets this in the following way: 'So now we bear the image of the heavenly man by faith due to have in the resurrection what we now believe. But we have worn the image of the earthly man from the starting point of the human race.' (*Gen. litt* IV.23.40). What follows here is a lengthy discussion of Adam's original state, the pristine state of the *imago Dei* before sin (see also IV.25.42). Augustine then questions what kind of state this image will be in after the resurrection. His answer is that human knowledge will not be perfect until the image is fully formed, thereby becoming equivalent to the angels, seeing God for what he truly is. More on *visio Dei* in the section 4.iii on *visio intellectualis*.

3.iv.e. Similarities to Plotinus' Doctrine of Sin

When Augustine relayed in *Conf.* VII.20.26 his attempt to ascend to God in the Platonist manner, he explained several causes as to why he was not able to remain in God's light: the soul's attachment to the body weighed the soul down, his own lack of humility and the darkness of his own soul (VII.21.27). Pride, as Adam's original sin, was for Augustine the first stumbling block which prevented the soul from fully experiencing God. The Platonists' lack of recognition of how important humility was for the ascent was in his eyes a serious doctrinal defect. They were ignorant of Christ's Incarnation whose humility was exemplary. Augustine also stressed that the origin of evil in the world was the human soul; the will was diseased, because it consistently turned its back on God. One needed Christ to provide atonement and to heal the will to be able to attain happiness and salvation. Thus the awareness of Christ's Incarnation, at least for these reasons, was for Augustine indispensable for contemplating the divine. Apart from this major difference in Augustine's thinking -Christ as intermediary in his depiction of the ascent- Augustine's notion of sin is in many ways comparable to that of Plotinus. To illustrate this, two topics will be discussed here: the sin of pride and the human will as the origin of sin.

In spite of the fact that the great Platonist himself was a humble and tolerant man, as Porphyry told us in *The Life of Plotinus*, his *Enneads* did not treat human pride to the extent that Augustine did. On the other hand, Plotinus' conception of *tolma* does approach this to some degree.¹⁰¹ *Tolma* or audacity,¹⁰² is similar to original sin in that it is a primeval condition which all other beings inherited. This movement first occurred at the coming of existence of *Nous* who felt the urge to distinguish himself from the One. Thereafter, beings sought to separate themselves from their source and establish themselves as independent entities. This entailed distancing oneself from one's source and falling away from it -a kind of *aversio Dei* in Augustinian terms, which is exemplified in the following passages:

The individual souls, certainly, have an intelligent desire consisting in the impulse to return to itself, springing from the principle from which they came into being, but they also possess a power directed to the world here below, like a light which depends from the sun in the upper world, but does not grudge of its abundance to what comes after it,...But they change from the whole to the part, and belonging to themselves, and, as if they were tired of being together, they each go on their own. Now when a soul does this for a long time, flying from the All and standing apart in distinctness, and does not look back towards the intelligible, it becomes a part and becomes isolated and weak and fusses and looks towards a part in its separation from the whole, it embarks on one single thing and flies from everything else. It comes to and turns to that one thing battered by the totality of things in every way, and has left the whole and directs the individual part with great difficulty; it is by now applying itself to and caring for things outside and is present and sinks down into the individual part...(Enn. IV.8.4.1-22)... And since the sin of the soul

101 *Enn.* V.1.1, IV.8.4; Treated in Chapter III.3.v. Plotinus on 'Matter, Evil, Sin and Error'.

102 'What is it, then, which has made the souls forget their father, God, and be ignorant of themselves and him, even though they are parts which come from his higher world and altogether belong to it? **The beginning of evil** for them was audacity (*tolma*) and coming to birth and the first otherness and the wishing to belong to themselves. Since they were clearly delighted with their own independence, and made great use of self-movement, running the opposite course and getting away as far as possible, they were ignorant even that they themselves came from that world; just as children, who are immediately torn away from their parents and brought up far away do not know who they themselves or their parents are. Since they do not anymore see their father or themselves, they despise themselves through ignorance of their birth and honour other things, admiring everything rather than themselves, and astonished and delighted by and dependent on these (earthly) things, they broke themselves loose as far as they could in contempt of that from which they turned away.' (*Enn.* V.I.1.1-17)

can refer to two things, either to the course of the descent or to doing evil when the soul has arrived here below.... (Enn. IV.8. 5.16-18)

Plotinus indicates here that audacity and turning away from God result in a number of sins. Self-isolation, for example, which was for him a false attitude, because no matter how separate one believed oneself to be, one was nonetheless always connected to the divine, albeit unconsciously. Self-isolation could lead to egocentricity, which in turn could potentially lead to evil-doings. As explained in the foregoing section 3.iv., this was generally Augustine's interpretation of the fall of Adam in a nutshell:¹⁰³ as a result of his weakness, Adam disobeyed God by renouncing, as it were, his dependency on the Father. This led to a life of isolation (expulsion from paradise) and hardships (which were the curses of God).¹⁰⁴

Augustine's conception of sin can be illustrated in the quote below, depicting the bad will falling or turning away from God. In this context, Augustine is referring to Lucifer, the fallen angel, as the epitome of evil, whose sins hardly differ than those of Adam. *'It is the general practice to inquire more minutely into the devil's own nature, ...a bad will is one that is inordinately **disposed to prefer lower goods to higher ones**; and that thus it came to pass that a spirit of the rational creation, delighting in its own power, as surpassing that of all other creatures, became swollen with pride and thereby fell from the bliss of spiritual paradise and was eaten up by jealousy.'* (Gen. litt XI.13.17).¹⁰⁵ Although Plotinus did not mention demons here as the cause of evil in the world, the passage from the *Enneads* above resembles Augustine's words here, in that it involved a preference for lower or exterior things of the world to the higher goods of God, which is essentially the cause of suffering and other troubles.

Plotinus recognized the problem of the human will which caused sin and evil, in directing its love and desire to matter and the world, as well as excessively to oneself (Chapter III.3.v.). The will was associated with the notion of *epistrophê*-which is equivalent to Augustine's *conversio*, which likewise involves the will. In Plotinus' cosmology, turning to the source to contemplate it was first instigated by the *Nous*. This action was imitated by the higher Soul and the World Soul, who also turned to contemplate their superior source. Yet Nature-Soul as well as the individual souls below were not so adept at contemplation (see Chapter III.2.iii.d). They were more prone to the material world and physicality, thus were mostly turned in the wrong direction. As such, they tended to wholly forget their origin. These aspects were clearly demonstrated in the quote from the *Enneads* above (and in the quote in note 102). Forgetting one's origin for Plotinus potentially caused sin and illusory thinking. These aspects were of influence on the human soul, as obstacles to actualizing her intellect, which otherwise had a natural connection to the divine.

Augustine likely read these insights in the *Enneads* and approved of them. They were evident in his doctrine of sin, yet his doctrine contained different accentuations, due to his orientation to exegesis of biblical stories. Turning away from God for both Augustine and Plotinus essentially encompassed the belief that the material world was the sole reality. Turning to the world or to the body in search of ultimate truth was for both thinkers tragically illusory. Both thinkers endorsed the idea that the visual world with its material images could not supply the mind with ultimate truth. It would only provide knowledge of a transient and illusory character. There are only slight differences between the two as regards how a human seeking union with God should deal with the world. The discussion of this topic will resume in Chapter VI (3.iii.g 'Augustine's Reception of Plotinus' Epistemology') in a more global comparison of the doctrines of intellect of Augustine and Plotinus.

103 Gen. litt XI.15.20; Gen. contra Man 11.16.24.

104 Gen. litt XI.35.47-38.51.

105 See also Gen. litt XI.14.18 and 15.19.

4 The Ascent: the Soul's Vision and the Contemplation of the Ideas

4.i. Introduction

At Augustine's first reading of the Platonic books in *Conf.* (VII.10.16-12.18; Chapter II.1.ii.c), he experimented with their 'inward turn'. He could perceive God's light above his own mind, an immaterial light from the Creator, which he could differentiate from the light of his own soul. Yet he was unable to remain in this light for longer than a few instances. Throughout *Conf.* there are at least four or five of these ascent experiences to God's light, each with its own accent.¹⁰⁶ Augustine's depictions were appropriately labeled 'Platonic ascents',¹⁰⁷ as they generally followed the exact same pattern as those of Plotinus (see Chapter III.4): the ascent began with beauty perceived at the sense level, moving one's perception from outer, material things, to one's own thought processes, progressively further to the depths of the soul, eventually contemplating God or the eternal Ideas in their pure, immaterial manifestation in the Intellect while being illuminated by God above. (*Nb.*: In Plotinus' account, the soul ascended beyond the *Nous* to the One.)

The accounts of Augustine's ascent differed from those of Plotinus in that he was quick to note that the ascent 'failed', in the sense that he was not able to hold onto his focus on God's light as he longed to do. The difficulties to stay in God's light had to do with among others things, the weakness of the will, the necessity of Christ's grace to heal one's sick will, so that it could stay attuned to the divine. In the last section we saw how Augustine included the infirmity of the will and sin in his exegesis of the image of God in his doctrine of creation. There he also mentioned the soul's inseparable relationship to its body as cause of the inability to remain attached to the divine. This was also due to the rational soul's inability to completely control the body. The soul's urge or necessity to control the body kept humans preoccupied with their physical needs and thus distracted from God. It is noteworthy that in *Conf.*, Augustine did not mention the contemplation of the Ideas in the accounts of ascent to the light.¹⁰⁸ Because Augustine's depiction of the contemplation of the Ideas are important for this study, we will now depart from *Conf.* and turn to the works where the Ideas are explicitly dealt with.

In the summary of Augustine's doctrine of creation earlier in this chapter, the essay *De Ideis* was referred to as Augustine's only exposition on the Ideas. This was an early work (ca. 394-395) in which he defined the eternal Form principles instrumental in God's creation act.¹⁰⁹ The notion of the divine Ideas was important for his definition of the soul as *ratio* which, in turn, was instrumental for his designation of the term *imago Dei* as the rational soul (*mens*).¹¹⁰ In the latter exposition, the *imago Dei* was that region of the soul capable of turning to and experiencing God's light, a capacity which derived from the soul having originated in the realm of the angels, the *caelum caeli*. The latter had also a

106 *Conf.* VII.17.23; vision at Ostia: IX.10.23; X.8.12, XI. 9.11.

107 For example: 'And so step-by-step I ascended from bodies to the soul which perceives through the body and from there to its inward force to which bodily senses report external sensations, this being as high as beasts go. From there again I ascended to the power of reasoning to which it is to be attributed the power of judging the deliverances of the bodily senses. This power, which in myself I found to be mutable, raised itself to the level of its own intelligence and led my thinking out of the ruts of habit. It withdrew itself from the contradictory swarms of imaginative fantasies, so as to discover the light by which it was flooded. At the point, it had no hesitation in declaring that the unchangeable is preferable to the changeable...So in the flash of a trembling glance it attained to that which "is". At that moment I saw your "invisible nature" and understood through the things which are made. But I did not possess the strength to keep my vision fixed. My weakness reasserted itself and I returned...' (*Conf.* VII.17.23 -translation Chadwick, 1992).

108 I cannot provide an explanation for this. The eternal Forms are only mentioned in *Conf.* fleetingly or by inference such as in XII.3.3, 6.6, 8.8, 13.16, 16.23., 20.29, 29.40; and XIII.2.2, 4.5, 20.27, 33.48. These examples deal predominantly with the Creator transforming formlessness to form.

109 *Div. Qu.* 46: *De Ideis*.

110 Treated in 2.vii. and viii. of this chapter. *Gen. litt* XII.20.30-31.

strong connection with the Ideas. At the time of the first creation phase, the angels contemplated their Creator 'in action' as it were and subsequently acquired a complete knowledge of his Ideas and of how the creation was accomplished. Thus the rational soul was able to imitate this angelic movement, by turning to God to contemplate Him and/or his Ideas. The contemplation of the Ideas was also relevant in Augustine's eschatology, in which he posited that at the resurrection in the afterlife, the holy souls or images of God will be re-formed to perfect images by the Creator, the *Verbum Dei*. These souls will acquire the same perfect knowledge of creation as the angels: the full knowledge of the Ideas in a complete divine vision.

These themes: perfect knowledge of God, divine visions and contemplating the Ideas, will be the main subjects of this section on the ascent. Due to the importance of the contemplation of the Ideas in this context, it is useful to return to *De Ideis* and examine Augustine's account of the ascent and contemplation there in section ii. Thereafter we require *Gen. litt.*, and especially book XII, for two reasons: first, in order to obtain a more complete picture of Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Dei* as intellect; secondly, to obtain a more complete picture of Augustine's eschatology. Here he describes the *visio Dei* at the end of the afterlife, when perfect knowledge is obtained. These two themes come together in his doctrine of the three visions, in particular his conception of *visio intellectualis*. Additionally, this conception is of fundamental importance for his explication of the *imago Trinitatis* in *Trin.* in Chapter V, where he provides more information on what the eternal principles signify for the ascent of the image of God.

4.ii. Contemplation of the Ideas and the Ascent in *De Ideis*¹¹¹

This essay only mentions the highest part of the soul as the rational soul (*mens*) but not the *imago Dei*. '...every soul but the rational is denied the power to contemplate these Ideas. This the rational soul can do by that part of itself wherein lies its excellence, i.e., by the mind and reason, as if by a certain inner and intelligible countenance, indeed, an eye of its own.'¹¹² Thus, Augustine says, only the highest part of the soul can contemplate the Ideas, it is the most excellent because of its reasoning facility. The rational soul is the mind's eye. Contrasted with the physical eyes which only visualize the particular, individual images of the Ideas, the mind's eye, in other words, the *imago Dei*, is that with which one is able to discern the temporal images from the eternal Ideas. It can also experience divine visions:

And indeed, not any and every rational soul is prepared for that vision, but rather, the soul which is holy and pure. It is this soul which is claimed to be fit for that vision, i.e. which has that very eye with which the ideas are seen. – an eye sound, pure, serene, and like those things which it

111 Secondary Literature on *De Ideis*: the introductions from the following two translations: *Saint Augustine Eighty-Three Different Questions*, (D. L. Mosher), no. 46, 79-81; *BA 10*, (G. Bardy, J.-A. Beckaert, J. Boutet), No. 46, 123-129; V. Boland, *Ideas in God According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, Source and Synthesis* (Leiden: Brill, 1995); L.M. de Rijk, "Quaestio De Ideis, Some notes on an important chapter of Platonism" in: J. Mansfeld and L.M. de Rijk. (eds.) *Kephalaion Studies in Greek Philosophy and Its Continuation Offered to Professor C.J. de Vogel*, (Assen: 1976), 204-213, 207-208; J. Hessen, *Augustins Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 186-199; T. Kondoleon, "Divine Exemplarism"; H. Meinhardt, "Idee", *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, in: J. Ritter und K. Gründer (eds.), Band 4: I-K, (Darmstadt: 1976), 55-65, (Kapitel 3); H. Meyerhoff, "On the Platonism of St. Augustine's *Quaestio De Ideis*", *The New Scholasticism*, 1941-42, Volume XVI, 16-45; J. Pépin, "Augustin, *Quaestio De Ideis*, Les Affinités Plotiniennes" in: É. Jeaneau, H.J. Westra (eds.), *From Athens to Chartres. Neoplatonism and Medieval Thought, Studies in Honour of Edouard Jeaneau*, (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 117-134; O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind*, 189-198; E. Pluimer, "Diversis Quaestionibus octoginta tribus" in: *AttA*, 276-277; A. Solignac, "Analyse et sources de la Question *De Ideis*", in: *Augustinus Magister*, (Paris: Études Augustiniennes), 307-315; L. Zwollo, "St. Augustine's Mystagogical instruction of Ideas and images, in: P.J.J. van Geest (ed.), *Seeing Through the Eyes of Faith*, LAHR 11, (Louvain: Peeters, 2016) 289-302.

112 *De Ideis*. The English translations utilized here are Mosher's.

endeavors to see. (1) ...Now among the things which have been created by God, **the rational soul is the most excellent** of all, and it is **closest to God** when it is **pure**. **And in the measure that it has clung to him in love,**¹¹³ in that measure, imbued in some way and **illuminated by him with light, intelligible light**, the soul discerns -not with physical eyes, but with its own highest part- in which lies excellence, i.e., with its intelligence -those reasons whose vision brings to it **full blessedness**. These reasons (*Rationes*), as was said, may be called *ideas*, or *forms* or *species*, or *reasons*; and while it is **the privilege** of many to name them what they wish, it is the privilege of very few to see them in their reality. (*De Ideis* 2)

The rational soul is able to contemplate the Ideas, because it possesses access to divine intelligibility and also because it possesses to a certain degree this intelligibility itself.¹¹⁴ To contemplate the sacred Ideas in the Intellect of the Creator, this part of the soul must become like the things it endeavors to see: pure, sound and serene. The rational soul, the *imago Dei*, intellect, or the mind's eye, is the location of the soul's intelligence and is thus the meeting place between the human self and God. In this sense it is here where the *mens humana* has a certain affinity with the *mens divina* where the primeval Ideas exist. It is in this awareness where a relationship can unfold, which possesses the potential to become a true image of God and as stated in *Gen. litt.* III.20.30-31, where one obtains knowledge of God.

The sentence in *De Ideis* that the rational soul '*is the closest to God when it is pure.*' requires elucidation. This involves the second type of image of which Augustine speaks in his doctrine of creation (see section 2.viii.), *imagines* or *phantasmata*, which pertain to mental images of appearances in the physical realm. If a person longs to be closer to God and contemplate His Ideas, then the mind must be purified of its attachments to physicality in the visual world. It is the rational soul which is most suited for purifying the whole soul. A corresponding illustration of this purification is an intriguing passage in book XII of *Gen. litt.*¹¹⁵ Augustine expresses there, that one's vision of the transparent truth in the region of the intelligible is obscured by '*a cloud of false opinion*'. He is

113 *Gen. litt.* XII.6.15; 17.18. In this quote, 'love' (or 'preference') is identified with intellect. Augustine also relates love and intellect in *Trin.* especially where he elaborated on his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis*. Cf.: Zwollo, "Prayer, Desire and the Image of God: Augustine's Longing for God in his 'Prayer to the Holy Trinity'", CPO Conference in Utrecht August 2014, forthcoming.

114 In *Gen. litt.* XII.10.21, Augustine equates the term *intellectualis* with *intelligibilis*, underlining the close connection between the human intellect and the intelligible world of Ideas. This equivalency can be best understood in the context of self-knowledge: that the mind is one with its own knowledge. The intellect in the state of being pure intelligibility, (*visio intellectualis*) is infallible in its discernment of truth. (See subsection 4.iii.c)

115 *Gen. litt.* XII.26.54: 'Moreover, if a man has not only been carried out of the bodily senses to be among the likenesses of the bodies seen by the spirit, but is also carried out of the latter to be conveyed as it were, to the region of the intellectual or intelligible, where transparent truth is seen without any bodily likenesses, his vision is darkened by **no cloud of false opinion**, and there the virtues of the soul are not tedious and burdensome. For then there is no restraining of lust by the effort of temperance, no bearing of adversity by fortitude, no punishing of wicked deeds by justice, no avoiding evil by prudence. The one virtue and the whole of virtue there is to love what you see, and the supreme happiness is to possess what you love. For there, beatitude is imbibed at its source, whence some few drops are sprinkled upon this life of ours, that amid the trials of this world, we may spend our days with temperance, fortitude, justice, and prudence. It is surely in pursuit of this end, where there will be secure peace and the unutterable vision of truth, that man undertakes the labor of restraining his desires, of bearing adversities, of relieving the poor, of opposing deceivers. There the brightness of the Lord is seen, not through a symbolic or corporeal vision, as it was seen on Mount Sinai, nor through a spiritual vision such as Isaiah saw and John in the Apocalypse, but through a direct vision and not through a dark image (*sed per speciem, non per aenigmata*), as far as the human mind elevated by the grace of God speaks face to face to him whom He has made worthy of this communion. And here we are speaking not of the face of the body but that of the mind.' (Taylor). (Augustine is describing here an intellectual vision increasing in intensity to a full blown *visio Dei*. See notes 131 and 139)

referring to these images of physical objects or phenomena, collected in the mind's memory from human experience in the world of the physical senses.¹¹⁶

Augustine's advocating the distancing from corporeal and spiritual images in one's soul does not indicate a negative attitude in regard to the material realm or these images, as it may appear here. Corresponding to his theory of the three visions here in *Gen. litt* XII, Augustine brings a clear differentiation into his account of the ascent and vision of God. He establishes an existential hierarchy in the creation, in which immaterial, intelligible objects are superior to the spiritual and corporeal images. Corporeal and spiritual visions are inferior to intellectual vision because they are susceptible to false interpretation and illusion. These images *phantasmata* or *imagines* are, on the other hand, of utmost importance because they are the stuff of knowledge which the mind processes and uses to form ideas and gather knowledge.¹¹⁷

Yet the activity of contemplating the Ideas in itself is for Augustine also a means of further purification. This is especially clear when we ponder what precisely this knowledge of the Ideas consists of, which, as we will see, has a purifying nature. It included the causal rational principles by which the Creator made the world.¹¹⁸ Important too is the realization that their source is the Creator himself. Augustine says that we know the Ideas already to some extent by their particular images in our world. In this way, knowledge of the Ideas is latent in the human mind. Yet the eternal Ideas are not just intelligible notions with material counterparts as images. They can also include divine Virtues such as Prudence, Justice, Chastity and Piety.¹¹⁹ Elsewhere, he indicates others: conceptions such as Beauty, Goodness, Chastity, Wisdom and Truth (*Div. Qu.* 23, among others). The Forms are also referred to as the eternal and unchangeable laws of God (*Civ. Dei* IX.22), principles of cosmic order and the source of numerical and aesthetic form (*Div. Qu.* 78). There could be one Form for all human beings, but not necessarily for all individuals.¹²⁰

As a final note on *De Ideis*, the indebtedness to Plotinus' conception of contemplation of the Ideas in this work is easily detectable.¹²¹ This essay, belonging to *Div. Qu.*, an early work, displays a similar account to that of the Neo-Platonist: an 'easy ascent' to the Light without further analysis of the 'problems along the way.' There is also no mention of the necessity of Christ's grace or specifications on the relationship between the rational soul and God. Nor are there any biblical references. This might also be due to the fact Augustine intended this treatment as a succinct introduction.

116 Cf. *Conf.* VII.17.23: the purification of physicality; *ibid.*, X.17.26: going beyond memory and the self to touch God; *ibid.* X.27.38: God and true happiness are beyond the realm of creatures. Sin, or the error man makes, is judging that the images from the material existence are the only truths which exist (*Gen litt.* XII.36.69).

117 *Scientia* and *sapientia*: e.g. *Conf.* X.8-13; *Trin.* XII.15.25. During intellectual vision, the Ideas are contemplated. *Gen. litt.* XII. 26.53, 28.56 and 35.52; For a more profound treatment of Augustine's thoughts on acquiring knowledge in relation to the Ideas, divine knowledge and illumination, including critical questions regarding Augustine's theory of Ideas, see R. Crouse, "Knowledge", *AttA*, 486-488; W.J. Hankey, "Ratio, Reason, Rationalism", *AttA*, 696-702; R. Holte, *Béatitude et Sagesse, Saint Augustin et le problème de la fin de l'homme dans la philosophie ancienne*, (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1962) 345-360; R.A. Markus, "Augustine, Reason and illumination" in: A.H. Armstrong, *et al* (eds.), *Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), 362-373; G. Matthews, "Knowledge and Illumination" *CCA* (2001), 171-185; R. Nash, "Divine Illumination", *AttA*, 438-440; G. O'Daly, "The response to skepticism and the mechanisms of cognition", *CCA* (2001), 159-170; L. Schumacher, *Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge*, (Oxford: John Wiley and Sons, 2010).

118 Also in *Gen. litt* IV.32.49.

119 *Gen. litt* XII.17.34. / Justice (e.g. *Trin.* VIII.6.9).

120 As Plotinus sometimes suggested: e.g. *Enn.* V.7. See also note 53.

121 For a more detailed treatment of the influence of Plotinus on *De Ideis* as well as other suggested sources, see e.g.: J. Pépin, "Augustin, Quaestio *De Ideis*, Les Affinités Plotiniennes"; *ibid.*, "Analyse et sources de la Question *De Ideis*" in: *Augustinus Magister, Études Augustiniennes*, Paris, (307-315).

Now we shall return to *Gen. litt* and proceed to book XII to Augustine's theory of the three visions. This section is not only relevant for the reasons stated above in the introduction. Additionally, Augustine's theory of the three visions provides an excellent example of one of Augustine's 'epistemological ascents'. In turn, this demonstrates a clear parallel to those of Plotinus' (Chapter III.4.ii.-iv.). Furthermore, Augustine attributed to the *imago Dei*-the intellect- the same characteristics as Plotinus to his human intellect *nous*. The *visio intellectualis* also supplements our understanding of Augustine's conception of the rational soul-*mens-intellectus* which circumscribes the *imago Dei*.

4.iii. *Visio intellectualis* in *Gen. litt. XII*¹²²

4.iii.a. Context of Augustine's Theory of the Three Visions

Before exploring Augustine's notion of intellectual vision, brief attention should be given to the context in which his theory occurs. Prior to book XII, Augustine had been involved with an exegesis of the creation story in Genesis. At the close of book XI, Augustine discusses Adam and Eve, their sin and their expulsion from paradise. In the beginning of book XII, Augustine announces that he is now going to focus on one aspect which came up frequently in his exegesis which now requires a separate elucidation. 'Now we will speak at our leisure of the question of paradise...' He turns -not to the story in Genesis- but to the second book of Corinthians (12:24) in which St. Paul mentions someone¹²³ who was 'caught up in third heaven'; or 'caught up into Paradise and heard secret words that man may not repeat'.¹²⁴ The question at large for Augustine now is whether or not paradise is located in this 'third heaven'. He asks, is this third heaven where Paul was carried away to (*quo raptus est*), a spiritual or physical place? (XII.1.2) This question leads him to explicate the phenomenon of divine revelations which are reported in the bible.¹²⁵ Book XII is hence geared to the exegesis of these visions in their association with a definition of paradise.

4.iii.b. Augustine's Definition of Three Visions

The first type of vision concerns seeing "corporeal images" (XII.2.3) *visio corporalis*, from our physical sense perception. These images differ from those of the second type, which appear in our minds

122 Cf. P. Agaësse, A. Solignac, BA 49, "Les trois genres de visions", 575-585; M.A. Aris, "Intellectus", A-L, vol. 3, Fasc. 5/6, (2008), 647-659; T. Breyfogle, "Intellectus", AttA, 452-454; Boland, *Ideas*, 82; P. Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self, The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford: University Press, 2000), 9-17, 17-20, 53-54 and 63-73; J. P. Kenny, *The Mysticism of Saint Augustine: Rereading the Confessions* (New York: Routledge, 2005) chapter 9: "Snatched up to Paradise"; M. E. Korger, and H. Urs von Balthasar, *Psychologie und Mystik (De Genesis ad litteram 12)*, Sigillum 18, (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1960), 5-24; Korger, "Grundprobleme der augustinischen Erkenntnislehre erläutert am Beispiel von *De genesis ad litteram XII*" *Recherches Augustiniennes*, vol. II, 1962, 33-57; G. Madec, "Savoir et voir", *Lectures Augustiniennes* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 221-40; O'Connell, *Origin of Soul*; O'Daly, *Philosophy of Mind*; R.J. Teske, "Augustine and the Vision of God" in: F. van Fleteren, J. C. Schnaubelt, J. Reino (eds.), *Augustine Mystic and Mystagogue*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 287-308; Zwollo, "Visio Intellectualis".

123 For Augustine it is obvious that Paul is referring to himself here.

124 *Gen. litt* XII.1.1.; Taylor's translation. Augustine also refers to 2 Cor 12.2-4 (Paul's experience of being snatched out of his body and up to Paradise) in *Gen. litt* III.20.30, in his treatment of the *imago Dei*. This is an additional affirmation that when Augustine was dealing with his treatment of the *imago Dei* as intellect in book III that he was already thinking of his theory of three visions intended for book XII-where this quote has particular significance, and more significantly, where his theory of intellectual vision is delineated.

125 To illustrate these three visions, Augustine uses various examples of visions told in the bible. Such as: Paul, who saw paradise; the dish descending from heaven appearing to Peter (Acts 10:11); John's visions of the Apocalypse (Apoc. I. 13-20); in Ezekiel (37:1-10), the plain with the bones of the dead and their resurrection; in Isaiah: God seated before him, and the seraphim and the altar from which the coal was taken to cleanse the lips of the prophet.

similar to recollections, visualizations or dreams.¹²⁶ Images of this kind resemble the things which we have seen or experienced in the physical world (See section 2.viii). Augustine gave these the perplexing term ‘spiritual vision’ or *visio spiritualis*.¹²⁷ The term ‘spiritual’ (XII.7-9)¹²⁸ here refers to the human spirit in its distinction to physicality in the material world, pertaining to the first type of vision. The term is also used to differentiate the lower from the higher parts of the mind, and in this case, from the higher, the intellect which pertains to the third type, intellectual vision. In spiritual vision, a state of rapture can occur (XII.5.13, 4.9). This can also occur in a *visio intellectualis*, which Augustine characterizes in a number of ways. One of the ways is the mind being *carried out of the bodily senses* in order to transcend the images appearing in corporeal and spiritual visions (XII.26.54). Thereby a vision is obtained in which the deeper significance of the content of the first two types of visions is immediately grasped. An intellectual vision consists exclusively of true knowledge,¹²⁹ in contrast to the first two visions which are susceptible to erroneous judgment or *clouds of false opinion*. (See quote in note 114.) Additionally, intellectual vision understands, interprets and judges spiritual and corporal visions.¹³⁰ One’s mind is elevated ‘*to the region of the intellectual or intelligible, where transparent truth is seen without any bodily likenesses*’, to the region of pure Ideas, such as Virtues which have no physical counterparts. ‘*The one virtue and the whole of virtue there, is to love what you see and the supreme happiness is to possess what you love. An unutterable vision of truth, where beatitude is imbibed at its source...the brightness of the Lord is seen...through a direct vision.*’ (XII.26.54).¹³¹ From this point onwards, we will concentrate solely on this *visio intellectualis*, illustrating the main points of interest in book XII, namely six specific characteristics of this vision.

126 An image of, for example, a place such as Carthago, where Augustine had lived and already knew – a recollection *phantasia* – as opposed to *phantasma*, which one imagines, such as a place where one has heard of and not been, for Augustine, such as Alexandria (*Gen. litt* XII.6.15– Hill; Taylor: XII.23); *Trin.* VIII.6.9; *De musica* 6.11.32; *Ep.* 120.2.10.

127 Many researchers have recognized Augustine’s indebtedness to Porphyry for his notion of *spiritus* here: E. Gilson, P. Agaësse, J. Pépin, M. Dulaey, A. Solignac. References from G. Madec, *Lectures*, 221–240, 236.

128 In *Gen. litt* XII.7.18 (Taylor), Augustine shows how the bible sometimes uses the term *spiritus* indiscriminately and to signify different things, including those things which in Augustine’s view pertain to the rational soul as image of God in the context of spiritual renewal (e.g. 1 Cor. 15:44). In Augustine’s second kind of vision, it is clear that the English term “spiritual” or even the French *esprit* will not exactly correspond with Augustine’s definition of his second type of vision. Cf.: Agaësse and Solignac, *BA* 49, 342: note 10; Taylor, *Gen. litt*, 301–302, notes 13 and 15 on Augustine’s usage of the terms spirit and spiritual.

Noteworthy is that the Latin term *mens*, which is designated as the rational soul or *imago Dei*, also includes spiritual images in the imaginative faculty for memory. Augustine will make a clearer differentiation between *mens* and these material images in recollections in *Trin.* XII–XIII (e.g. in the differentiation between *scientia* and *sapientia*). See Chapter V.3.iii.e and f.

129 XII.14.29 (Hill)/ XII.63 (Taylor).

130 In *Gen. litt* XII. chapters 8 and 9, Augustine explains that intellectual vision is what enabled the biblical prophets to comprehend symbolic revelations. In 9.20, Augustine distinguishes between spiritual visions and prophecy. A spiritual vision with recognizable images from the experiential world is not enough to qualify as prophecy, unless it has been deciphered or interpreted by intellectual vision. Some biblical personages possessed this intellectual vision, according to Augustine, such as Joseph, who interpreted the dream of the Pharaoh, or Daniel, who interpreted the dreams of the king. ‘*For Pharaoh saw only a light impressed upon his spirit, whereas Joseph understood through a light given to his mind. And for this reason the former had the gift of tongues, the latter, the gift of prophecy. In the one there was the production of the images of things; in the other, the interpretation of the images produced.*’ (*Gen. litt* XII.9.20)

131 In *Gen. litt* XII.27.55, Augustine includes the condition that being carried out of the physical senses in intellectual vision must entail a sort of provisional death. Solignac and Korger defend the standpoint that Augustine expressed in his earlier works that a full vision of God, or a perfect intellectual vision while still in a physical body was only to be experienced by a certain select few, namely Moses and Paul (as described in *Gen. litt* XII.26.54). See M. Korger, “Grundprobleme”, 50–51; Korger and H. von Balthasar, *Psychologie* (1960), 1–3, 5–6; and P. Agaësse and A. Solignac, *BA* 49, 580. Madec on the other hand, correctly notes that in *Gen. litt* book XII, Augustine simply uses Moses and Paul as biblical examples to illustrate perfect intellectual vision, without such further specification (*Lectures*, 232). R. Teske discusses the *status quaestionis* of this debate and questions whether Augustine believed in the possibility of other mystics experiencing a *visio Dei* while in this life (“Vision of God”, 296–8); See also: F. van Fleteren, “*Acies mentis*”, *AttA*, 5–6; J. Kenny, *Mysticism* “Snatched up”.

4.iii.c. Characteristics of the *Visio Intellectualis*

i.) The superiority of intellectual vision: Augustine affirms that intellectual vision, the superior level of the soul's consciousness, can always exist without the inferior levels (spiritual and corporeal visions). But the inferior means of perception can only attain their full realization by relying on the superior level. Hence, the superiority of intellectual vision to spiritual vision is marked by its virtue of lending spiritual images their significance and effectiveness (XII.11.22, 24.51).

ii.) Intellectual vision must have an object: intellectual vision entails the understanding of things which are not visible in the physical world nor in our recollection of those things. Hence, its objects are things which are of truer substance and thus bear no resemblance to material images. In the passages below, Augustine illustrates the three visions with the example of love as object, dealing with the commandment, Love your neighbor as yourself.¹³²

*When one reads... "You shall love your neighbor as yourself", the letters are seen with bodily vision, the neighbor thought about spiritually, love observed intellectually. But when the letters are not there in front of you, they can also be thought about spiritually and when your neighbor is present he can be seen with bodily vision, while **love in its proper nature can neither be discerned with the eyes of the body, nor thought about in spirit by means of an image resembling a body but only known and perceived through the mind, that is the intellect.*** (XII.11.22)

Here he indicates that love, as immaterial concept, can only be truly understood by the intellect.¹³³ The other function of intellectual vision concerns judging corporeal images; this can be done when the Ideas (in Christ's illumination) are the mind's object. These serve as standards or norms for assessment, as to the degree of resemblance or dissemblance to God (XII.3.6, etc.).

iii) *Intellectualis* is equivalent to *intelligibilis*:¹³⁴ this enigmatic statement has to do with the relationship of the intellect to its own intelligible content. The mind sees its own mind, therefore one's mind is intelligible to itself. This insight pertains to intellectual vision in the sense that what the intellect understands is equivalent to its intelligible objects.¹³⁵ In this way, the intellect itself has a strong affinity with the intelligible Ideas. In other words, it is impossible for the immaterial intellect to be equal to corporeal images.

132 *Gen. litt.* XII.11.22. Besides this there is another reference to love in *Gen. litt.*: Augustine also says that a perfect intellectual vision—a *visio Dei* entails the ultimate bliss to possess what you love: *Gen. litt.* XII.26.54 (see quote in note 115).

133 This has particular relevance in Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* in *Trin.* VIII-X, in his analysis of the mind which he fuses love and knowledge together— in a triad which serves as the best Trinitarian image of God. The commandment 'Love your neighbor' plays a significant role in his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* in *Trin.*

134 This brief statement is a unique declaration in Augustine's oeuvre. Although he makes references to this concept in *Trin.*, (e.g. in the context of self-knowledge in books IX- X), it is never stated so explicitly as here.

Gen. litt. XII.10.21: 'But the intellectual type of vision, which is proper to the mind, is on a higher plane. The word "intellect" so far as I know, cannot be used in a wide variety of meanings, such as we found in the case of the word "spirit". **But whether we say "intellectual" or "intelligible", we mean one and the same thing, though some have wished to make a distinction between the two, designating as intelligible that reality which can be perceived by the intellect alone, and as intellectual the mind which understands.** But whether there exists any being perceivable by the intellect alone but not itself endowed with intellect—this is a large and difficult question. On the other hand, I do not believe there is anyone who either thinks or says that there exists a thing which perceives with the intellect and is at the same time incapable of being perceived by the intellect. **For mind is not seen except by mind. Therefore, since it can be seen, it is intelligible, and since it can also see, it is intellectual,** according to the distinction just mentioned. Putting aside, then, the extremely difficult question about a thing which would only be understood but not possess understanding, we here use "intellectual" and "intelligible" in the same sense.' (translation Taylor, see note 2)

135 He explains this to some extent in *Gen. litt.* XII.7.15: 'The third kind of vision by which we see and understand love, embraces those objects which have no images resembling them which are not identical with them.'

To illustrate this, let us look at a similar construction occurs in *Trin.*, in his notion of '*verbum*'.¹³⁶ This term signifies a thought which truly reflects what the mind knows, and by definition, this thought is true, it cannot be false. This is because one's thought cannot reflect what one does not know – this is illogical. In this way, a particular thought itself can only be equal to its content. However a *verbum* pertains only to the limited truth of an individual. Intellectual vision, on the other hand, grasps universal truth, the Ideas in the *Verbum Dei*. This aspect is tied together with the next characteristic, its infallibility, discussed below. References to a more detailed explanation of this complex notion as well as its background and history are provided in the note below.¹³⁷ These passages have provoked much academic discussion as to its interpretation, as well as to its source, which was originally Aristotle, yet likely transmitted to Augustine via Plotinus. In the *Enneads*, this phenomenon occurred at the level of the divine Intellect: its self-knowledge, in which it contemplated its Ideas, whereby the subject was one with its object. Plotinus specified that the perception of material images did not achieve such an equality; furthermore, in the *Nous*, discursive thought -which is bound to material images- is not possible: an immaterial entity cannot embrace something of a material nature and then be equal to it. (See Chapter III.4.ii.b.). Augustine expressed generally the same idea in *Gen. litt* XII.7.15 although he did not mention this so explicitly or extensively as Plotinus.

iv.) The infallibility of intellectual vision: *Intellectualis autem visio non fallitur* (XII.14.29 and 30). 'But there is no deception in intellectual vision; for either a person does not understand, and this is the case of one who judges something to be other than it really is, or he does understand, and then his vision is necessarily true.' The superiority of intellectual vision is likewise substantiated by its infallibility, as well as its capacity to judge the inferior visions which can in themselves be illusory (XII.25.52). There is no question of faith here, only an understanding of truth which is recognized immediately. A perfect intellectual vision, as experienced by the angels (section 3.ii.b) entails an immediate and intuitive apprehension of the truth, precisely as in many depictions of Plotinus' Intellect.

v.) Impenetrable by demons or evil: spiritual visions can be incurred by God, angels (VIII.25.47) or even demons. Augustine explains that demons can know the spiritual images in our minds in order to deceive or manipulate us. However, demons have no power in the intellectual region of our minds and certainly not the *virtutum internam speciem*, the interior form of virtues which an individual has assimilated (XII.17.34). This statement is interesting in light of Augustine's critique of the Neo-Platonist practice of theurgy expressed in *Civ. Dei* (See Chapter II.2.ii). Theurgy entailed the reception of a spiritual vision by a demon, which aided an aspirant in the contemplation of God. Augustine is inadvertently underscoring his opposition to such techniques here, showing his preference for pure intellectual vision (*n.b.*: and by doing so, concurring with Plotinus who did not advocate theurgy) and in particular the vision instilled by Christ, the perfect, holy Intermediary.

vi.) Visions of God and beatitude: there are several variations of intellectual vision which Augustine describes in *Gen. litt*. For example, the perfect intellectual vision of the angels which entails a total glimpse and simultaneous understanding of the whole of creation, of all creatures and their

136 Treated in Chapter V.3.iii.c; *Trin.* VIII.9.13, IX.7.12-13, 9.14, 11.16 and XV.10.17-18, 11.20, 12.22, 14.24 and chapters 15, 16, 21 and 24.

137 *Gen. litt* XII 10.21. For further clarification, see P. Agaësse and A. Solignac, "«Intellectuel» et «intelligible»" BA 49, 566-567; J. Brachtendorf, *Die Struktur des menschlichen Geistes nach Augustinus, Selbstreflexion und Erkenntnis Gottes in De trinitate* (Hamburg, 2000), 48-52; J. Pépin, "Une curieuse déclaration idéaliste du *De genesi ad litteram* (XII.10.21) de saint Augustin, et ses origines plotiniennes (*Ennéade* 5.3.1-9 et 5. 5.1-2)" in: *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses*, Tome XXXIV, (1954), 373-400; Re-printed in *Ex Platoniorum persona. Études sur les lectures philosophiques de Saint Augustin*, (Amsterdam: A.M. Hakkert, 1977), 181-221, 183-210.

causal principles. It consists of perfect knowledge of God given by the *Verbum Dei* which is so glorious that they remain in constant praise of God as thanks.¹³⁸ In humans, the intellectual activity encompasses an ascent to God. It begins by transcending the physical images of the two inferior visions, progressing beyond to a region of the mind to a perfect virtuous existence, in which supreme happiness is experienced when the vision of the Lord is seen (XII.26.54. See complete quote in note 115). Intellectual vision, which is a divine vision, is always instigated by Christ. This vision evidently goes beyond contemplating the Ideas and judging the images and can be accompanied by ecstasy.

Augustine's description of an intellectual vision as a perfect *visio Dei* is related to his interpretation of Paul's idea of third heaven (2 Cor. 12.2-4), a complete vision of God face-to-face, as he believed Moses experienced in Exodus (*Gen. litt* XII.27.55).¹³⁹ Otherwise Augustine reserves the perfect vision of God for saintly persons after the death of the physical body at the resurrection. Associating the term 'paradise' with *visio Dei*, he made it equivalent to acquiring perfect beatitude, *visio beatifica*.¹⁴⁰

4.iv. Synthesis of Augustine's Accounts of the Ascent

iv.a. Augustine's Doctrines of the *Imago Dei* and *Visio Intellectualis* in *Gen. litt*.

Reflecting on all the material treated in sections 3 and 4, we can confirm that Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Dei*, designated in *Gen. litt* III.20-30-31 as intellect, consisted essentially of an experience of oneself as image of God in an intellectual vision, as expounded in *Gen. litt* XII. This entailed the contemplation of the Ideas and an ascent to God. Let us now summarize Augustine's both treatments from sections 3.ii and 4.iii.

In his exegesis of Gen. 1:26-27 (*Gen. litt* III.20.30-31; section 3), Augustine described an ascent by the process of turning to the Creator, receiving illumination, which enabled one to contemplate the Ideas in God. In this way, the soul gradually received her formation. This formation consisted of the following: the knowledge of God, his Ideas, how the creation was made, understanding human reality as an inferior image to divine reality and realizing how Christ was one's personal Intermediary and savior: as Creator and Re-creator. The angelic world of pure intellect served as paradigm for the image of God.

Augustine specified the details of a complete epistemological ascent (*Gen. litt* XII; section 4): from physical to spiritual (mental) images to an intellectual grasp of the Ideas which included the understanding of the lower two visions or a vision of God (for example in XII.26.54). More specifically, the ascent began by turning away from the images which we perceive in the visual world in corporeal vision and inward to focus on ourselves. A step further upwards led the soul to the images which were imprinted onto the mind, stored in our memory or in the imagination (spiritual vision). Progressing beyond those images, by judging the degree of truth they contained, the mind turned towards to that which was above oneself (which was still inside oneself), to the region of intelligibility where God's Light radiated.¹⁴¹ In doing so, the soul established contact with the Creator, who was pure intelligible Light. In this region, divine Ideas or Virtues were contemplated which existed in the rational soul as well in that divine light in an even purer form. From God's Light, intellectual vision and true knowledge derived -as in an immediate understanding of corporeal and spiritual visions.

138 See section 3.ii.b; i.e.: *Gen. litt* IV.29.46, 30.47.

139 This extraordinary kind of vision entails a provisional exit from one's body or a temporary death. In discussing St. Paul's intellectual vision, Augustine concludes this he could not have experienced the perfect vision of the angels, namely because Paul says that he did not know whether he was in or out of his body while in the throes of the vision (*Gen. litt* XII.36.69).

140 e.g.: *Gen. litt* XII.28.56 and 32.60-36.69.

141 *Gen. litt*. VII.14: Augustine describes an intellectual vision enacted by individual will, turning away from the light of one's own eyes in order to have intellectual vision.

This encompassed not only the understanding of the material images in light of their resemblance/dissemblance to their models –but also of oneself as an image of God.

In intellectual vision, when the soul was turned to the Creator, to his illumination or the Ideas, it experienced an immediate intuition of the intelligible, –a flash of consciousness of immaterial, divine reality from having risen from physical vision to spiritual vision. The intellectual only had a rapport with the intelligible, the eternal Ideas in the *Verbum Dei*, in a sense that it was equivalent to that what it perceived there. In other words, it assimilated what it perceived, which was unchangeable, divine knowledge, and in doing so, it acquired a certain degree of divinity. This vision obtained infallible universal truth, which could never be deceptive. Nor could sin take place here.

Augustine mentioned the Virtues in intellectual vision, (XII.31.59), which could also be seen in oneself, beside one's vices. From these passages we can infer that in intellectual vision, one recognized the truth of oneself-as to how one falls short of the light which illuminated the intellect, which was perfect Virtue.¹⁴² One discerned the dissemblance of oneself as image of God to the perfect Image whom one images: Christ.

But the light itself is something else, the light by which the soul is enlightened in order truly to understand and observe all things either in itself or in this light. For this light is not God himself, while the soul is a creature, even though a rational and intelligent one made to his image. So when it strives to gaze upon that light, it blinks and shivers in its weakness, and quite simply lacks the power to do so. Yet that light is what enables it to understand whatever is within the range of its power. When therefore it is snatched up there, and being withdrawn from the senses of the flesh, it is set more firmly in the presence of that vision, not spatially but in its own kind of way, it also sees above itself the one by whose aid it also is enabled to see whatever it can see in itself by intellectual understanding. (Gen. litt XII.31.59)

Thus the soul acknowledged her weaknesses, sins and impurities in this vision. At the same time, she was aware of herself as an image of God and that her capacities derived from Christ, the Creator. She realized as well her total dependence upon Him for obtaining truth, becoming formed, virtuous, pure and godlike.

As Augustine stresses in *Trin.*, the Perfect Image Himself is an object of contemplation, whom the image consciously imitates in order to become more of a true image.¹⁴³ Here we are speaking of the Christ as the Son of God in his eternal contemplation of and love for God the Father (*Gen. litt* I.4.9, etc.) In *Trin.* Augustine explains the various ways in which the Incarnation of Jesus Christ serves a model for faithful to imitate (IV.1.3-3.6).

As we recall in Augustine's experiences of divine light in *Conf.*,¹⁴⁴ the realization of the ontological distinction between humans and God was always present in intellectual vision. The quote above illustrates this as well. As such, from these accounts, we can deduce that Augustine intended divine illumination to always be of short duration, even in intellectual vision; one is weakened by the soul's natural gravitation back to the realm of corporeal images. The intensity of intellectual vision

142 J.P. Kenny correctly remarks that moral lucidity is for Augustine a necessary condition for knowing God: in 'Augustine's understanding of religious knowledge as the exercise of interior contemplation by the soul...the souls' moral status defines its epistemic horizon. Because the soul is inherently in the frame-as it were- of any effort to discover the divine and the transcendent, its ethical character determines not just what it might be disposed to regard as cognitively certain but what it is actually capable of knowing.' "Faith and Reason", CCA (2014), 290.

143 *Trin.* VII.3.5.

144 *Conf.* VII.10.16, 17.23, 20.26; IX.10.23-26; XI.9.11.

depended on the purity of one's heart and the quality of perfection of the *imago Dei* (*Gen. litt* XII.28.56). Augustine indicated that *visio intellectualis* had various degrees and intensities. It could entail daily divine illumination (*Gen. litt* XII.31.59), for the sake of regular renewal of the image. Augustine also described a vision which could be a perfect, direct perception of God, 'face-to-face' in which one attains absolute truth and ultimate beatitude (XII.26.54, see quote in note 115). This is the long-term goal of the *imago Dei*, coinciding with obtaining the complete knowledge which the angels possess.¹⁴⁵ In the afterlife, at the time of the resurrection, the vision of saintly humans-images of God will be perfected by the Creator. They will obtain a full blessed vision of God, complete formation and perfect knowledge of God (*Gen. litt* XII.36.69). Hence, the soul's acquisition of divine knowledge and development did not, according to Augustine, cease after the death of one's physical body.

The capacity with which one perceives divine Truth also depends on the grace of God, to the extent that He had made one worthy of this experience.¹⁴⁶ In *Conf.*, Augustine recounted a similar experience as *Gen. litt* III.20-30, in which a conscious *conversio* towards God was described (*Conf.* XI.1.1.-9.11), which was deemed as an act of divine grace (XI.9.11). He attributed his search for divine knowledge to being a response to God's calling (XI.7.9), which was included in His foreknowledge (XI.1.1). From these passages it is evident that the true knowledge acquired in intellectual vision is for Augustine not just the fulfillment of one's personal search but is actually a gift of God, invoked by God. God's will and individual initiative are therefore intricately intermingled. During intellectual vision, the will is evidently functioning as it should, not in a broken manner, but optimally, consciously oriented to God.

Regarding Augustine's treatment of the *imago Dei*-intellect in *Gen. litt* from a bird's eye view, we can conclude that Augustine's notion of image of God can be better referred to as a higher state of consciousness or an intellectual vision, a dynamic state of mind in which one acquires knowledge of God and participates increasingly in God's light. This is differentiated from one's ordinary state of mind while functioning in the world.

4.iv.b. The Influence of Plotinus

We have seen many aspects of Plotinus' cosmology and psychology pass the revue in this chapter: his notion of intellect as image of God, the characteristics of the intellect, the contemplation of the Ideas and the epistemological ascent. We will not pause here to demonstrate these similarities in both thinkers because these aspects will be examined extensively in section 3 'The Image-Intellect' of Chapter VI. Moreover, in that chapter, those aspects corresponding to Plotinus' doctrine of intellect in Augustine's *Gen. litt* will be supplemented and reinforced with similar notions which he expounded in *Trin.*, which will be treated in Chapter V. In *Trin.*, Augustine expands his epistemology considerably and again utilizes many Plotinian elements in various ways. For example, his fusion of the element knowledge with the element love in his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* reveals an even further familiarity with Plotinus' epistemology and also with his notion of *Eros*. In *Trin.*, Augustine expands his doctrine of 'the image of God' to 'the image of the Trinity', borrowing other aspects of Plotinus' theory of knowledge and his conception of the triune Godhead. With the help of Plotinian psychology, Augustine also sharpens his views on the ascent and the soul's union with God, underscoring the soul's relationship with the *Verbum Dei* as well as with the three equal divine Persons in the Holy Trinity. In these doctrinal expositions, Augustine's explicit (and implicit) critique

145 *Conf.* XII.13.16, XIII.15.18; *Gen. litt* IV.23.40, 24.41, 25.42, V.20.38, VI.19.30, 21.30, XII.35.68, 36.69; *Trin.* XIV.19.25 and 26, XV.23 and 24; *Epistulae* 92, 147, 148.

146 *Gen. litt* XII.26.54:...quantum eam capere mens humana potest, secundum assumentis Dei gratiam,...

of Plotinus' philosophy is also evident. However, an interesting textual correspondence between Augustine and Plotinus can be demonstrated here which is not included in the analysis in Chapter VI. It has to do with the experience of intellectual vision and ecstasy.

Augustine commenced *Gen. litt* XII with a declaration of his intention to interpret what 'paradise' meant in a particular verse of Paul (from 2 Cor. 12:2-4) (XII.1.1-2). Here the apostle claimed to have known someone who had been '*snatched up to the third heaven...or Paradise*'. Augustine then proceeded to give a complete exegesis of these verses, out of which he devised his theory of three visions. In this context, he discussed ecstasy (XII.2.4, 12.26), the experience of being carried out of the body by a strong vision (XII.4.13) and rapture:

Next however, just as he has been rapt away (raptus) from the sense of the body to find himself among these bodily likenesses which are seen in the spirit, so too he may be rapt away (rapiatur) from these to be carried up to that region, so to say, of things intellectual or intelligible. There, without any bodily likenesses the pure transparent truth is perceived,... (Gen. litt XII.26.54).

Plotinus mentioned ecstasy only once in the *Enneads* (VI.9.11.27), in an experience of contemplation, in which he described imagining entering a sanctuary to contemplate, leaving the statues of the gods behind and entering into another kind of vision. Here the contemplator becomes one with Intellect and perceives himself as an image of that divine entity. The ascent continues further in which Plotinus describes the experience of letting go and being carried out of oneself, in quiet ecstasy of union with the One.

*...For this reason, this vision is hard to put into words (Enn. VI.9.10.19)...Since, then, they were not two, but the seer himself was one with the seen, (for it was not really seen, but was united to him) (LZ: the intellect with the Nous), if he remembers who he became when he was united with that, he will have an image of that in himself (VI.9.11.4-8)...when he had made the ascent- but there was not even any reason or thought and he himself was not there. If we must even say this; but he was **as if carried away or possessed by a god**, in quiet solitude and a state of calm, not turning away anywhere in his being and not busy about himself, altogether at rest and having become a kind of rest. He had no thoughts of beauties, but had already run up beyond beauty and gone beyond the choir of virtues, like a man who enters into the sanctuary and leaves behind **the statues in the outer shrine**; these become again the first things he looks at when he comes out of the sanctuary, after his contemplation within and intercourse there, not with a statue or image but with the Divine itself; they are secondary objects of contemplation. But that other (LZ: united with the One), perhaps, was not a contemplation but another kind of seeing, a being out of oneself (**ekstasis**) and simplifying and giving oneself over and pressing towards contact and rest and a sustained thought leading to adaptation, if one is going to contemplate what is in the sanctuary. But if one looks in another way, one finds nothing. These are **images** (mimēmata); and this, therefore, is how the wise among the expositors of holy things **express in riddles how that god is seen; and a wise priest who understands the riddle** may make the contemplation real by entering the sanctuary; (Enn. VI.9.11.11-29).*

Plotinus is describing an intellectual vision here in three of the same ways as Augustine's theory of three visions: corporeal (the sight of the statues in the sanctuary), spiritual ('*images ...this is how the wise...express holy things in riddles*') and intellectual: as in (among others) '*the wise priest who understands the riddle*.' Plotinus' conception of the ascent goes further than that of

Augustine's in *Gen. litt.*: from reason and thought the soul crosses over to the beyond -to the One, an incomprehensible, ecstatic experience. This theological view constitutes one of the main differences here between the two thinkers: the Godhead in Plotinus' philosophy is ordered hierarchically, and in Augustine's, the three divine Persons are completely equal. However, it can be argued that there are correspondences between Augustine's characterizations of the Holy Trinity and that of Plotinus' One, as we will see in Chapter VI.2.vi.

5. Recapitulation of the Main Points in Chapter IV

The study of Augustine's doctrine of the image of God in *Gen. litt.* resulted in a number of important insights. The most significant were the following:

Augustine's doctrine of the image of God was embedded in his exegesis of the creation story in Genesis. In his interpretation of Gen. 1:26-27, he identified the image of God with the rational soul, the highest region of the soul. The soul originated in 'heaven' at the initial, intelligible phase of the creation act. Heaven was a realm of pure, immaterial, intelligence, inhabited by angelic beings. The Creator of the world-the Word of God, *Verbum Dei*, who was essentially the pre-existent Christ, created this angelic realm as well as the human soul, himself.¹⁴⁷ The angels had the privilege of witnessing the entire creation act and were hence in possession of complete knowledge of God, which included a complete vision of the world of Forms (section 2). These were the rational principles or *rationes* or Ideas in the Creator's mind, which played a major role here, as they served as the intelligible models or archetypal Forms for all things created. The human soul-the image of God- was a unique creature in that it was rational, intellectual, could gather knowledge of God and contemplate the causal divine Ideas (section 3).

Augustine's theory of three visions in book XII of *Gen. litt.* had a strong, underlying connection with his exegesis of Gen. 1: 26-27 in book III (section 4). Here he delineated the characteristics of the intellect which were repeatedly associated with the image of God and the higher state of mind. His theory of the three visions depicted a step-by-step ascent to God. It began with the perception of visual images (*visio corporalis*), then of the images from the outside world in one's own mind (*visio spiritualis*), culminating in a vision which involved the contemplation of the Ideas (the *Verbum's rationes*), a *visio intellectualis*. In the latter, God's light was experienced from which an understanding of the deeper meaning of the lower two visions was obtained. This coincided with the acquisition of divine knowledge. An intellectual vision had a number of marked characteristics: the immediate and intuitive apprehension of truth, the equivalency of the intellectual to the intelligible, its superiority to all other visions, infallibility and its impenetrability to demons or evil.

Augustine made it clear that the term 'image' as in *imago Dei* was of a different kind than the rest of the images which manifested in this world, such as the material images of the Ideas or visual images perceived with the physical senses; or the images produced by the power of recollection *phantasiae* or imagined by the mind *phantasmata*. Only the rational soul -with its intellectual capacities to gather knowledge, especially divine knowledge- possessed the potential to become a perfect image of God. It was the only creature which could focus on immaterial concepts or God,

147 In other words, the human soul was not produced in an indirect manner by the *Verbum's rationes* (*causalis* or *seminalis*). A note of interest here is that Augustine designated the human soul as a *ratio causalis* which in this context may seem puzzling. Yet the same designation occurred in Plotinus' psychology: the individual human soul was a *logos*, its self-consciousness -as differentiated from the intellect- was also a *logos*; as such the human soul *logos* was differentiated from the creative formation principles such as the *logoi spermatikoi*, the latter of which involved the production of the body.

who, too, was designated as immaterial. The higher rational soul was as such a strictly immaterial state of mind, purified of the images or changeable knowledge acquired by the lower regions of the soul which were attached to the physical body. Nonetheless, Augustine deemed the rational soul as being subject to the transient and material world. In this way, Augustine differentiated clearly between the created or human material world and that of the divine.

He stressed in *Gen. litt* the necessity of a strong relationship with the Creator in order to return to God. To do so, one must strive to resemble God and to become a more perfect image of God. The *Verbum Dei* himself was a perfect image of God the Father. Thus the human images of God were images of the Creator, yet far from perfect. The *Verbum* would continuously renew the human images of God by his loving grace whenever they turned to his Light (section 3). Turning to Christ's illumination, as depicted in *Gen. litt* III.20-30, essentially entailed an intellectual vision. Augustine described intellectual visions as having various degrees of intensity. Yet a total vision in which God would be completely known, was not likely in this life. In the afterlife, the *Verbum Dei* would re-create saintly souls and endow them with their complete formation. At this time, they will be enabled to see God as He truly is, face-to-face. This would take place in a final, blessed intellectual vision. Subsequently, human images of God will become equal to the angels, who at the beginning of the creation act obtained their formation and their complete knowledge of God by the illumination of the *Verbum Dei*.

His exegesis of the story of Adam and Eve (section 3) illustrated how the image of God originally became lost (or damaged, as he corrected himself later) by their sin of turning away from God. The result was that focusing on God in the post-lapsarian era for any length of time would always be cumbersome. The cause was also human's propensity for sin, for example, due to pride or by desiring grandeur. These were some of the reasons he gave as to why a glimpse of the *Verbum Dei's* intelligible world usually would not last for longer than an instant. However, by voluntarily turning to Christ (*conversio*), the soul's damaged will would become healed in a gradual manner. Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Dei* in *Gen. litt* clearly served as a means to show how one could return to God, our source.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE HUMAN MIND AS IMAGE OF THE TRINITY IN *DE TRINITATE*



1.i. Introduction

This important chapter will illustrate how Augustine develops his doctrine of the *imago Dei* to its fullest-to the *imago Trinitatis* in *Trin.*¹ It will commence with a discussion of Augustine's treatment of his doctrine of the *imago Dei* in *Gen. litt* in light of his treatment in *Trin.* This will be followed by some introductory remarks on his method, the chronology of this work as well as the secondary literature concerning *Trin.* In order to deal with his treatment of the *imago Trinitatis*, it is necessary to first take the content of the whole work into consideration. By laying out the general summary of the content we can spotlight the context (-s) in which his doctrine of the image-intellect is embedded. These summaries include Augustine's characterization of the Trinitarian Godhead and his Christology in section 2. This material is derived mainly but not exclusively from books I-VII. His portrayal of the intellect as trinity starts from approximately book VII.12 with an exegesis of Gen. 1:26 and continues to the end of the work. This is documented in section 3 which is divided into three parts: Augustine's general treatment of the *imago Trinitatis* (ii.), his epistemology (iii.) and the element love (iv.). The fourth section of this chapter deals with Augustine's account of the ascent of the soul to God in two contexts: epistemologically and through the experience of love, mirroring the same treatment of Plotinus in Chapter III.

Due to the length and the textual richness of *Trin.* -as well as his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis*-, this exposition will remain necessarily general in character. Because this study is focused on Augustine's involvement with Plotinus, the summary of the *imago Trinitatis* will be mostly directed to his philosophical inquiries. However this does not make the theology in his doctrine any less important. This study will not be able to give his elaborations on Christian dogma (such as his doctrine on faith or sin) the adequate attention they deserve. Yet because they are indispensable for properly understanding Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis*, they are included in the treatment here, albeit in a general fashion. It will also not be possible to deal with all aspects of the *imago Trinitatis* in great detail (such as the finer points of his analysis of the mental trinities in the human mind.) In the third and fourth sections of this chapter, the subsections dealing with Augustine's treatment of love and knowledge, will indeed receive closer attention. As a continuation of this introduction, first an exposition will be given of Augustine's treatment of the *imago Dei* in *Gen. litt* and how it relates to that in *Trin.* (i); followed up by a short review of the secondary literature employed in this chapter (ii). Lastly, it will deal with Augustine's method in *Trin.*, its structure and its readership.

1.ii. The Treatment of *Imago Dei* in *Trin.* Compared to *Gen. litt.*

Augustine's treatment of the *imago Dei* in *Gen. litt.* represented an important formative phase of the doctrine having derived from his mature doctrine of creation. As such, all the elements of the *imago Dei* doctrine which had been treated in Chapter IV are present in some form or the other in *Trin.* The most important theme in *Trin.* from *Gen. litt.* is his view of the immaterial *imago Dei*, the highest part of the soul, the intellect, which is preoccupied with turning (*conversio*) to the Light and Wisdom *Verbum Dei*

1 CCSL 50: books I-XII and 50A: books XIII-XV; Translations: Saint Augustine, *The Trinity De Trinitate*, Introduction, translation and notes: E. Hill O.P., (New York: New City Press, 1991, 2002). (Note that although Hill's translation is generally considered very good, his numbering of the chapters is however confusing.); *Augustine On The Trinity Books 8-15*, G. Matthews (ed.) translation S. McKenna, (Cambridge: University Press, 2002); BA 15: -Dieu et son Oeuvre *La Trinité* (Livres I-VI) 1. Le Mystère Texte de L'Édition Bénédictine Traduction par M. Mellet, O.P. et Th. Camelot; Introduction par E. Hendriks (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1955), Notes Complémentaires Books 1-7; BA 16: -Dieu et son Oeuvre *La Trinité* (Livres VIII-XV) 2. Les Images, Texte de L'Édition Bénédictine Traduction par P. Aëgesse, Notes eT collaboration avec J. Moingt (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1955) Notes Complémentaires, Livres 8-15. The Latin text is included in BA 15-16.

(for example in: *Trin.* VII.3.4, 3.5; VIII.3.4-5, etc.) and being continuously renewed (*renovatio-reformatio-recreatio*) through contact with God and by knowledge of God (e.g: VII.6.12, etc.). In *Trin.* he elevates in particular the theme of the renewal of the spirit. His characterization of the intellect in his delineation of *visio intellectualis* is of utmost importance to keep in mind in *Trin.* as this equally applies to the *imago Trinitatis*.² He does not explain these characteristics again in *Trin.*, he simply assumes the reader's knowledge of such. The contemplation of eternal principles and the ultimate divine vision are equally major themes in this work.

However, a number of differences or changes can be noted in *Trin.*, not so much in respect to content but to accentuation and approach. Augustine allows himself the liberty to meticulously explain how the *imago Dei* is truly an *imago Trinitatis*, that is, by showing that trinities exist in the intellect which reflect the Holy Trinity (and in doing so, adhering to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity which found consensus in the 4th century councils). To do this, he requires a clear definition of the Holy Trinity to serve as the criteria of that which the intellect images. In *Trin.* he maps out the human mind in as many facets as possible, (more extensively than in *Conf.* X), analyzing which of these aspects or combination of aspects best reflect the relationship of the three Trinitarian Persons.³ Compared to *Gen. litt.*, his method in *Trin.* is in some ways more lucid and straightforward. In *Gen. litt.* he was dealing with different inquiries simultaneously and constantly re-questioning his own conclusions about the human soul. Often he found it necessary to re-evaluate and temporarily refute his own position. His conclusion was often drawn much further up at the end of another book, in a different context. In *Trin.*, he at least makes the effort to hold his general line of thought in focus, by summarizing and reminding the reader of his ambitions. Many inquiries which he vocalizes in the earlier books of *Trin.* are given a full answer in books XIV and XV.

On the other hand, his attempts at clarification do not necessarily make *Trin.* easier reading. It is of great advantage to the modern reader to familiarize oneself beforehand with Augustine's method and approach to his exploration into the human soul in *Trin.*, -which is why such an exposé is provided below. His ruminations on the reflection of the Holy Trinity in the human trinitarian image are largely convoluted and at times shroud his main inquiries.⁴ These explorations are often deemed as a kind of *exercitatio*

2 This is demonstrated throughout this chapter, e.g. V.4.i. on the ascent and V.4.ii.b. on the epistemological ascent. L. Ayres is one of few who correctly makes the connection between Augustine's treatment of the *imago Trinitatis* (the image of God as intellect) in *Trin.* and intellectual vision in *Gen. litt.* XII. Ayres is primarily dealing with contemplation here. *Augustine and the Trinity*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2010) 148-152. See also L. Schumacher, "The Theo-logic of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge by Divine Illumination", *Augustinian Studies*, 41:2 (2010) 375-399.

3 Augustine's doctrine of the Holy Trinity in *Trin.* is often criticized because it seems that his method of proving the triune Godhead is more related to the structure of the human mind.

4 e.g.: '...of all Augustine's works, the *De Trinitate* appears to us to be the most moorless, an intractable mass of speculation floating oddly aloof from foundation in any particular social context.' J. Cavadini, "The Structure and Intention of Augustine's *De Trinitate*", *Augustinian Studies* 23 (1992) 103-123.

mentis.⁵ These rigorous mental exercises⁶ do not become easier in the course of the whole work and stand in distinct contrast to the depictions of the ascent of the human mind to the Light, for example, in *Confessions*, where Augustine sweeps the reader up into his own autobiographical experiences with relative ease. Researchers in the past, represented by H. I. Marrou, deemed the books containing the most intense exercises as having little doctrinal value. The attitude today has changed. These books are still regarded as exercises but the content is taken more seriously.⁷ These passages of *Trin.* also seem to be intended for self-contemplation in order to fathom the intense complexity of that part of the mind which reflects the Trinitarian divine mind and/or Christ.⁸ This is particularly true for his treatment self-love, self-knowledge and *verbum* in books IX-X. In these books, Augustine is analyzing the intramental triads which will lead to the understanding of the best image of God possible. The tediousness of these books demand a deceleration of one's reading speed, yet once one has reached Book XIV, his synthesis of the relationship between the *imago Trinitatis* and the *Trinitas qui est Deus* becomes fluent again, rewarding the reader with an optimistic, call it even triumphant tone (for example in *Trin.* XIV.14.20). At any rate, we can say that upon completing *Gen. litt.*, Augustine apparently did not feel the satisfaction that the last word was said about the *imago Dei*.

Augustine's writing of *Trin.* overlapped his composition of *Gen. litt.*, the latter of which was composed between the years 401⁹ and 416.¹⁰ Hombert's chronology shows that the passages

5 This term demands definition. To give an example, Ayres specifies Augustine's usage of *e.m.* in *Trin.* as such: '...a training in modes of thinking increasingly interior, and increasingly free from images, a gradual intellectual movement from the material to the immaterial, fundamentally Neo-Platonic in character.' "The Chronological Context of *De Trinitate* XIII" in: *Augustinian Studies* 29 (1998) 111-139, 114; M. Claes supplements Ayer's definition in characterizing Augustine's early philosophical works as such: 'Exercitatio mentis is a training in thought. A gradual intellectual movement from the material to the immaterial, from the exterior to the interior, from temporal to pedagogic strategy to convince the reader of philosophia christiana. Augustine's use of the *e.m.* has a rhetorical character.' Although Claes' definition is based upon Augustine's earliest works, his definition in my view is well suited for *Trin.* Cf: M. Claes, "Exercitatio mentis and its function in Mystagogy: Opening up the Individual for Exercises in Communal Thinking and Living" in: P.J.J. van Geest (ed.), *Seeing Through the Eyes of Faith*, LAHR 10, no. 7/8, forthcoming; or "Exercitatio Mentis: een onderzoek naar Augustinus als pedagoog" Dissertation, Tilburg University, 2011, p. 237; See also J. Cavadini, "Structure, Intention", 104-105; Ayres, "Augustine on the triune life of God" in CCA 2014, 60-80; B. Studer, *Augustinus de Trinitate, Eine Einführung*, (München e.a.: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2005) 141, note 193.

There is not a consensus as to whether the term *e.m.* should be applied to Augustine's *Trin.* Studer does apply it. (e.g.: p. 78) and refers to Schmaus' work on *Trin.* (M. Schmaus, *Die psychologische Trinitätslehre des heiligen Augustinus*, 1967). Hendriks also refers to *exercitatio animi* (BA 15, 612-613). For further reading on *e.m.*: P. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life, Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995) 90 and 59. Hadot mentions Augustine but does not specifically treat Augustine in this work. See also Claes, *ibid*: *E.m.* or *e.a.* is an ancient practice known in philosophy schools. Plotinus or Porphyry are often cited as Augustine's sources.

6 One example of many in *Trin.* of where Augustine mentions his exercising of the reader's mind: 'But as far as concerns that supreme, inexpressible, incorporeal and unchangeable nature and the perception of it in some measure or other by the understanding, there is nothing on which the human mind could better practice its gaze...' (Hill: XV.27.49). See also XV.1.1: 'In pursuance of our plan to train the reader...' (All English translations from *Trin.* are Hill's unless otherwise specified.)

7 Brachtendorf criticizes Marrou for his claim that the frequent incoherency of the composition of *Trin.* is due to Augustine's dominating interest in *exercitatio animi* (which lack scriptural context). Brachtendorf rebukes those researchers, who out of inability to explain these books of *Trin.*, pin the tag *exercitatio* on to them, as if these passages have no dogmatic value. *Die Struktur des menschlichen Geistes nach Augustinus, Selbstreflexion und Erkenntnis Gottes in De Trinitate*, (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2000), 299-327; H.I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique*, (Paris: de Boccard, 1958), 299-327.

8 Ayres summarizes Augustine's standpoint on *e.m.* in *Trin.* IV and XIII as such: '...fallen humanity needs to undergo a certain exercitation and such an exercitation is provided by the Incarnation.' ("The Christological Context of Augustine's *De Trinitate* XIII: Toward Relocating Books VIII-XV." in: T. Finan, V. Twomey (eds.), *Studies in Patristic Theology*, (Dublin: Four Courts, 1998), 95-121, 117.

9 P.M. Hombert, *Nouvelles Recherches de Chronologie Augustinienne*, (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2000). Hombert's edition dates of *Gen. litt.*: books I-IIIb: 404-405; IIIb-XII: 412-414.

10 Hill, *On Genesis*, 164: "Thus the composition of this great commentary on Genesis occupied more than about 15 years. There is a disagreement as to whether he began the work in 399 or 401 or 404. It was published in 416."

containing his interpretation of the *imago Dei* (*Gen. litt.* III.20.30-31 and throughout XII, including his theory of three visions) were presumably worked on in 412-414. These dates correspond to the suggested dates of Augustine's writing of his books III-IV of *Trin.* (in 412-415). The passages in which Augustine begins to intensely treat the *imago Dei* in *Trin.* occur in book VII, which he continues to elaborate, according to Hombert, from 416 onward. What the chronology confirms is that after the composition of *Gen. litt.*, Augustine progressively continued to expand his doctrine of the *imago Dei* in *Trin.* In sum, between the years 412-427 Augustine was developing his exegesis of Gen. 1:26 to its utmost and fullest.

Further, it is of interest to include here that it will not always be helpful to arrange the exposition on the *imago Trinitatis* in this chapter according to the successive order of books or the chronology. This investigation is conceptually oriented and does not attempt to unravel the final details of his doctrinal development. Moreover, although Augustine generally deals with his doctrine of the Holy Trinity in books I-VII and the image of God in books VII-XV, important insights on the human image are found throughout the whole work. For this reason, the chronology of the books *Trin.* cannot play a significant role here.

1.iii. Secondary Literature on *Trin.*

The inquiries of this study, and particularly for this chapter, demand three types of literature. The first type is on *De Trinitate* itself, which is indispensable for understanding Augustine's method and the corresponding structure of the work. Without this, a full picture of how the *imago Trinitatis* fits into Augustine's doctrine of the Holy Trinity would not be possible. The second type of secondary literature involves Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* itself –because *Trin.* is the only work where he expounds this. These secondary sources must necessarily concentrate on the themes knowledge and love. The third kind of literature must deal with the influence of Plotinus, especially on the aspects of knowledge and love in Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis*, with specific references to the *Enneads*. Let us then approach the secondary literature according to the three types above.

(1) on *Trin.*: for beginning to read *Trin.*, a general summary of Augustine's doctrine of the Holy Trinity is advisable, such as those of Studer, R. Williams, M. Clark, E. Hill or in BA 15-16.¹¹ Rowan Williams remarks on *Trin.* are relevant to my choice of these authors: 'Over the last two decades, there has been a quiet revolution in Augustinian studies, especially in the study of what most would agree is Augustine's theological masterwork, *De Trinitate*.'¹² Williams discloses that older studies of *Trin.* contain many stereotypes which have slowly been replaced in the last years by more recent research. Hence, because there is sufficient recent literature, I have generally avoided older studies, even earlier celebrated commentators, such as M. Schmaus (*Die psychologische Trinitätslehre des hl. Augustinus*, 1927), many of whose conclusions remain subject of discussion.¹³

11 B. Studer, *Einführung*, 2005; R. Williams, "De Trinitate" AttA, 845-851; M. Clark, "De Trinitate" CCA 2001, 91-102, and the introductory notes in Hill's and BA 15-16: Mellet's, Camelot's and Aëgesse's French translation of *Trin.*

12 The quote is taken from the introduction of: E. Bermon et G. O'Daly (eds.) *Le De Trinitate de saint Augustin: exégèse, logique et noétique*, (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2012), vii-viii.

13 Other commentaries on *Trin.*: R. Kany, *Augustins Trinitätsdenken Bilanz, Kritik und Weiterführung der modernen Forschung zu "De Trinitate"*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007); M. Wisse, *Trinitarian Theology beyond Participation, Augustine's De Trinitate and Contemporary Theology* (London, NY: T&T Clark International, 2011); in addition to these, the introductions to the translations mentioned above by Hill and Hendriks (BA 15).

(2) on Augustine's *imago Trinitatis*: The authors most consulted for Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Dei* in general for this study are predominantly Sullivan and Lagouanère.¹⁴ Both are extensive and include a section or chapter specializing on the *imago Trinitatis*. The following three authors whose studies are seminal for a more profound theological or philosophical understanding of Augustine's doctrine are: Ayres,¹⁵ Brachtendorf¹⁶ and Williams.¹⁷ These scholars, in my opinion, excel above all others in their expertise on *Trin.* and do complete justice to the profundity and complexity of this work. They share in common a greater interest than most in Augustine's epistemology, which is focused on contemplation, wisdom and the ascent to God.

(3) on the influence of Plotinus, especially on the aspects of knowledge and love in Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis*: for this category of literature, the above mentioned studies of Ayres and Brachtendorf, with their thorough knowledge of *Trin.* and interest in Plotinus, are veritable support pillars. Ayres' *Augustine and the Trinity* is more deeply concerned with theological topics; while Brachtendorf's two books are the more proficient of the two in highlighting the philosophical aspects of Augustine.

Likewise crucial to this research are the studies of the most notable expert on Augustine, Platonism and in particular on Augustine's Platonism. John Rist¹⁸ is not only knowledgeable of the greater part of Augustine's oeuvre, including *Trin.*, but also of the entire *Enneads*, the works of Plato and other ancient philosophers. Rist has written most extensively on the influence of Plotinus' in Augustine's thought, such as in his classic *Ancient Thought Baptized*. His studies are of extreme importance to my study's main inquiries. In addition to dealing with the element knowledge (intellect, contemplation, wisdom etc.) he is concerned with the element love, which is the decisive element in this study's main inquiries: determining how Augustine made use of Plotinus' philosophy and how we can characterize Augustine as a Christian Platonist. Moreover he is the most prominent author on the influence of Plotinus' notion of *Eros* on Augustine's doctrine of love. In the first three chapters of his most recent publication (*Augustine Deformed*, 2014), he deals with Augustine's dependence on Plotinus' *Eros* for his conception of *amor* and *voluntas*.

I regard my study as a continuation or perhaps even a concentration of important points inspired from the studies of Brachtendorf and Rist. The extensive chapter here on Augustine's doctrine of the image of God as *Trinitatis* can also be regarded as complementary to Sullivan's and Lagouanère's.

14 J.E. Sullivan, *The Image of God, The Doctrine of St. Augustine and its Influence*, (Dubuque, Iowa: Priory Press, 1963); Another recommendable general overview: J. Lagouanère, *Intériorité et réflexivité dans la pensée de saint Augustin. Formes et genèse d'une conceptualisation*, (Paris/Turnhout: Brepols, 2012).

15 L. Ayres, *Trinity*; "The Discipline of Self-Knowledge in Augustine's Book X-De Trinitate" in: L. Ayres (ed.) *The Passionate Intellect, Essays on the Transformation of Classical Traditions*, (London: Transaction, 1995), 261-296; "The Christological Context".

16 J. Brachtendorf, *Struktur*; and as editor, *Gott und Sein Bild-Augustins De Trinitate im Spiegel gegenwärtiger Forschung*, (München: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2000). (Contributors to this volume consulted for this study: Kany, Hill, Studer, Madec; Horn, Pëpin, Hölscher, Drecoll, Brachtendorf, Markus, Kreuzer, Rist and Booth.)

17 R. Williams, "Sapientia and the Trinity, Reflections on the *De Trinitate*" in: B. Bruning, M. Lamberigts, J. van Houtem (eds.) *Collectanea Augustiniana, Mélanges T.J. van Bavel* (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1990); "*De Trinitate*" AttA (1999); "The paradoxes of self-knowledge in *De Trinitate*" in: J.T. Lienhard et al (eds.), *Collectanea Augustiniana: Augustine Presbyter Factus Sum* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993).

18 J. Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); "Love and Will around *De Trinitate* XV 20 38" in: Brachtendorf (ed.) *Gott und Sein Bild*, 205-218; *Eros and Psyche Studies in Plato, Plotinus and Origen*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1967); *Augustine Deformed, Love, Sin and Freedom in the Western Moral Tradition*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2014). Rist's latest book also addresses many issues which are relevant to this study.

1.iv. Augustine's Method and Structure of *Trin.*

One of Augustine's aims in this work is to demonstrate to critics of the Nicæan creed that the divinity and co-equality of Father, Son and Holy Spirit are rooted in Scripture.¹⁹ He also attempts to treat all the questions which he deems important for understanding Catholic faith. Some treatments appear at times to be of an explorative nature, because he does not necessarily find all the answers to his inquiries (*Trin.* XV.25.45). Yet the questions provide a departure point for pouring through the Scriptures for possible solutions.²⁰ The explorative character of *Trin.*, according to Van Geest, can also lead us to assume *Trin.* as a product of Augustine's personal search or a form of self-enrichment, similar in many ways to his exposition on the Holy Trinity throughout *Conf.* XI-XIII. Seen in this way, *Conf.* could be considered as 'blueprint' for *Trin.*²¹ Many scholars claim a clear underlying system in *Trin.*²² Many as well (such as Ayres, Williams, Brachtendorf, etc.) insist on the unified character of this work.²³

The basic structure of his treatment in *Trin.* tells us something about Augustine's method. The content can be divided roughly in three parts: the Holy Trinity, the *imago Dei-Trinitatis*, then a synthesis. Now to take a closer look at this division: in books I-VII, Augustine deals with the Holy Trinity in order to argue it as the sole God and cause of the world. He explicates here not only the Son of God as Word of God, but also his earthly mission as Jesus Christ as well as the mission of the Holy Spirit. Then in book VII, the subject matter 'descends' as it were, to the creation of man, the human image as reflection of the Holy Trinity. Generally, his exegesis of Gen. 1:26 commences in VII.12 with the rational soul, the intellect. He then pulls the reader through a profound analysis of the mind, in search of the best mental trinity which qualifies as an image of the Trinity, which continues up to around book XIII.²⁴ (These trinities will be brought to light in subsection V.3.ii.c.-e.). Throughout his exploration of the image of God, he includes important designations of God, such as in book VIII (Chapter V.2.v. and vi.) as Love, Good and an object of contemplation. Here we see Augustine sharpening his positive theology. Basically, books VIII-X are geared to studying the intellect with its glimpse 'inwards and upwards' through the less conscious regions of the human mind, searching for the limits in the *mens*, and gradually, in books XI-XIII, distinguishing gradations of the rational soul. As we recall, Augustine designated the *imago Dei* as the rational soul and as the *mens*, but in *Trin.* he distinguishes which region of the mind pertains to the image of God.

Because the higher soul is constantly confronted with outer circumstances and sense data, Augustine makes another 'descent' in book XI, in order to clarify 'the outer man' and determine the trinities

19 Clark, *Trinitate*, 91; See also S. MacCormack, "Augustine on Scripture and the Trinity", in: Mark Vessey (ed.), *A Companion to Augustine*, (Chichester (UK): Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 398-415.

20 Studer, *Trinitate*, 91-92 in reference to *Trin.* I.2.4.31

21 P.J.J. van Geest, *The Incomprehensibility of God: Augustine as a Negative Theologian*, (Louvain: Peeters, 2010) 145-146; Rist, *Ancient Thought Baptized*, 145, note 129.

22 See Hill's table illustrating the symmetrical structure of *Trin.*: *Trinity*, 263-265; F. Van Fleteren, "Ascent of the Soul", *AttA*, 63-67; 66.

23 Marrou's view was that books I-VIII contained theological information concerning Catholic Trinitarian dogma underpinned with Scripture in order to refute heretics. Yet book IX deviated from this program with its philosophical (i.e. unscriptural) approach, striving to grasp what was treated earlier on the basis of faith (Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, 315-327). Other researchers (such as Sullivan and Hill) have endorsed Marrou's stance. Brachtendorf (*Struktur*, 120) disagrees with Marrou's claim of the abruptness of Augustine's transition from VII to IX. Brachtendorf argues that Augustine consistently holds onto his main inquires and lines of thought. Scriptural passages are indeed utilized in these books. Marrou also claimed that the *imago Dei* is introduced at the end of VII (which I have shown that this is not the case: it begins in IV with the discussion of the *Verbum* as perfect Image). *Trin.* is also often depicted as consisting of two parts: books I-VII on the Godhead, VII-XV on the image.

24 R. Williams described books IX-XIV as *an enormous digression*. ("*Sapientia*", 323) which Brachtendorf refutes (*Struktur*, 120-121).

involved in sense perception of material images.²⁵ Gradually his explanation shifts to how human consciousness elevates itself from these images in worldly knowledge *scientia* to divine wisdom *sapientia* (books XII and XIII). *Scientia* also comprises in one sense knowledge of the self (*cogito* or *ratio*) as it is bound to the body. Yet it remains to be explained for Augustine how this knowledge can ultimately lead to *sapientia* of the *Verbum Dei*, which is the knowledge assimilated by the *imago Trinitatis*. His further distinctions of the rational soul in these books consist of its highest immaterial part, the *ratio superior*, where one makes contact with God; the lower part, the *ratio inferior*, is the consciousness in which we function in our daily lives. He indicates that only the *ratio superior* and *sapientia* pertain to the image of God. Thus, books XI and onwards disclose a drawn out epistemological ascent. We could say that the subject of the ascent is what this work is all about, as this theme comes to a head in books XIV-XV.²⁶ In these books he binds the results of his analysis together, creates a synthesis of how the human mind is related to the Holy Trinity and evaluates the potentials within the ascent to God. He culminates *Trin.* with a prayer to God as Trinity.

The complex structure of *Trin.* raises questions as to the best strategy for a researcher to treat certain isolated themes within it, as this study proposes to do. Although it is sometimes helpful to treat Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* following the same order as his books, it will not be possible to pursue this with rigidity.²⁷

1.v. Readership

Who did Augustine have in mind while writing *Trin.*? Some scholars believe that his readers would have been Christians with considerable knowledge of Platonism. M. Wisse suggests that they might even be Platonists themselves or 'borderline Christians'.²⁸ Others such as Cavadini and Ayres characterize *Trin.* as a 'Neo-Platonist polemic' or an 'anti-Porphyrrian polemic'.²⁹ While the speculations are numerous and interesting to mention here, the inquiries of this study are not geared to deliver a response to this question. It can however question the validity of the claims of readership above concerning Platonism.

The question arises whether these authors, while pinning a label on the intention of *Trin.* as a kind of Platonist polemic, have sufficiently taken into consideration the large amount of philosophical material Augustine borrowed from Plotinus, (or COULD have borrowed, for instance, such as the aspects of the Aristotelian categories) which would characterize the church father himself as

25 This raises questions as to the logical succession of the books in the whole work. Given Augustine's hierarchical structure of the ascent, it would seem that the outer man should have been treated at the beginning of his exegesis of Gen. 1:26 in book VII. Augustine says himself in XIV.3.5: '...let us take an example from bodily things, which we spoke about sufficiently in the eleventh book. You will remember that in our ascent from lower things to higher, or our entrance from outer things to inner, we found a first trinity in the body ...'. Sullivan speculates as to why Augustine dealt with the outer man in book XI, which might have something to do with its hurried publication after the theft of his manuscript (*Image of God*, 110-note 33).

26 F. van Fleteren, "Mysticism in the *Confessiones*, A Controversy Revisited" in: F. van Fleteren, J. C. Schnaubelt, J. Reino (eds.) *Collectanea Augustiniana Augustine: Mystic and Mystagogue*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 318-319.

27 Homberg reproaches many researchers of *Trin.*, that their treatments of the Trinity show little regard for dogmatic development based upon chronology (*Nouvelles*, 412-414). We must however assume that in the twenty years Augustine needed to compose this work, that his editing or refining of ideas would not have necessarily occurred in the order of the books.

28 M. Wisse, *Participation*, Chapter 1 Theology. See also Cavadini, who states that *Trin.* VIII-XIV represents one of Augustine's finest examples of the Neo-Platonist anagogy ("Structure, Intention", 105). Ayres, in discussion with Cavadini, writes that Augustine's need to emphasize faith in Christ is relevant to his polemic against Neo-Platonists which suggests a continuation of his anti-Neo-Platonist critique in earlier works. Ayres points to Augustine's critique of Platonists in book IV, his anti-Porphyrrian polemic in which Augustine argues that '*Christian purification (Christ's Incarnation) is more effective that which is provided by philosophers.*' ("Christological Context", 95-121 and 117-121).

29 Cavadini, ("Structure, Intention", 105); E. Booth: '*The whole De Trinitate is a critique on Platonism.*' in: "St. Augustine's '*notitia sui*' related to Aristotle, the early neo-Platonists and Hegel", *Augustiniana* 27, 1977, 70-132, 364-401 (from R. Kany, "Typen und Tendenzen der *De Trinitate*-Forschung seit F. Chr. Baur" in: J. Brachtendorf, *Gott, Bild*, 13-28).

Platonist? To give an example, let us recall Augustine's critique of the Platonist practice of theurgy in *Civ. Dei* and in book IV of *Trin.* (Chapter II.2.ii. and iv.). He directed his critique in *Civ. Dei* to Porphyry and in *Trin.* to the 'arrogant philosophers'. As we saw in Chapter II, Augustine did not condemn Plotinus for these theurgical practices, because he apparently recognized that Plotinus opposed them as well. The same researchers accounted for above who label *Trin.* as an anti-Platonist work, do not balk at the claim of the indebtedness of Plotinus or Porphyry for certain parts of Augustine's Trinitarian doctrine. Yet they fail to provide an explanation for why Augustine would devote a whole book to a Platonist polemic while at the same time, embracing a large amount of what he deemed as the acceptable part of Platonism. Deeper consideration of Augustine's relation to Platonism is called for, which this study will indeed provide. Required as well is a clearer differentiation of his relationship to individual Platonists. For as we also saw in *Civ. Dei*, his judgment of certain philosophers varied. This point will be returned to in the conclusions of this study (Chapter VII.4.iv.).

2. The Trinitarian Godhead and Christology: Augustine's Criteria for his Analysis of the *Imago Trinitatis*³⁰

Augustine's doctrine of the *Sancta Trinitas* has not only been the subject of discussion since its composition but as Williams suggested, in the last two decades, the interest in re-interpretation of *Trin.* has resurged. The inquiries of this study however, focused more on the *imago Trinitatis*, demand only a general overview of Augustine's Trinitarian theology and only as far as it relates to Augustine's anthropology. Yet on the other hand, like the doctrine of the human image, the divinity which the human soul images is by no means a simple matter. Thus in order to do justification to the doctrine of the human image, the subject of the Holy Trinity requires a particular documentation, as the former serves as criteria for the latter. The summaries here of Augustine's view on the individual Persons in the triune Godhead are not intended to be comprehensive. They are geared to facilitate the comparison between Augustine and Plotinus in Chapter VI.

2.i. The Son and his Incarnation

In the first half of *Trin.*, Augustine's goal is to demonstrate the divinity and the co-equality of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, deploying citations from Scripture.³¹ In *Trin.* I, he explains the divine nature of the Son which was retained in his human physical Incarnation. However, regarded within the framework of Augustine's Platonist ontology, and the tenet of the Godhead as being completely immaterial and invisible, this assertion would not seem logical or acceptable (especially to the critics of the Nicene creed).³² For this reason, Augustine sets out to confront the difficulty of this theology and to adequately explicate how the Incarnation fits into his scheme of the Holy Trinity as immaterial and transcendent, as well as how or why the Son's divine essence always remained unchanged.

He initially approaches this problem by regarding the appearances of God told in the Old Testament which occurred historically before the Incarnation of Christ (*Trin.* II.18.35). He emphasizes that none of these appearances were manifestations in their true substance. It was only the divine

30 The general summary of Augustine's doctrine of the Holy Trinity in books I-VII is derived from: Studer, *Trinitate*, 93-94; Williams, "De Trinitate", 845-851; and M. Clark, "De Trinitate", 91-102. The studies of L. Ayres should be included here, although they are less general in character. They are most helpful for reflecting on the more profound implications of particular aspects of Augustine's doctrine. See Ayres note 15.

31 Clark, *Trinitate*, 91.

32 Porphyry attacked the Christians on this point which Augustine responded to in his earlier work *Civ. Dei* X.29.

Son, the Word, who appeared as Jesus Christ. Just as the other apparitions of God in the Old Testament (as well as the appearances of the Holy Spirit), the physical body of the Word of God was not an appearance in his true being because the being of Christ, even in his physical suffering on the crucifix, his death and resurrection, was not earthly (III.2.7). *Trin.* II explores the question as to how the Son as such can equal the Father, not only in light of the semantic discrepancy implied in the Father-Son relationship, but in light of the fact that the Son and the Holy Spirit both have worldly missions. Because Scripture never mentions the sending of the Father, Augustine asserts therefore that the Father is the 'God of no other' (IV.20.28). He argues as well that the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit likewise does not threaten Trinitarian equality because its divine nature also remains intact (II.9.15.99). The Son's Incarnation was however superior to all other divine missions (IV.21.30-32) and is unique in that it was the only mission in the form of a human being in flesh and blood. Augustine declares the incarnational mission of the Son as the extension of the eternal procession from the Father. As such Augustine's exposé on the Incarnation emphasizes Christ's role as Mediator and at the same time, anchors Christ into the entire salvation history.

2.ii. The Holy Spirit

Augustine posits that the Holy Spirit was sent from the Father AND the Son and is thus the spirit of both (IV.20.29).³³ His intention now is to explicate the origin of the Holy Spirit.³⁴ Here he applies the adage 'God is Love' (1 Epistle of John 4.8) to primarily the Holy Spirit (IV.17.27 and VX.19.33), designating the Holy Spirit as God's love.³⁵ (The adage 'God is love' has other implications in Augustine's doctrine which will also be treated further in the subsections v. 'God is Love, God is Good.' and vi. 'God is Love thus the Holy Trinity is Love.') Augustine explains that human love is a gift from God which has its precedent in the outflowing of love of both Father and Son proceeding from them eternally (XV.26.45). Their gift of love permits humans to bind to God. He identifies the problem of distinguishing the generation (or the birth *natus*)³⁶ of the Son from the Father and the generation of the Holy Spirit from the procession of the Father and the Son (as *datus*) (V.13.14-5.14.15). Once again, Augustine admits the difficulty in comprehending this.³⁷ His solution is the designation of the Holy Spirit as the binding force between the Father and Son which establishes unity in the divine Trinity.

2.iii. Trinitarian Ontology: God's Equality in Essence, Substance

How does Augustine account for all these apparent changes occurring within the triune Godhead and still maintain his (Platonist) ontological claim that God is immaterial, transcendent, immutable and eternal as in his doctrine of creation?³⁸ First he asserts that the relation between the divine Persons only became manifest at the creation act. The Father and Son produced the Spirit in the realm of

33 In *Trin.* IV-VI (and especially in the latter half of *Trin.* XV), Augustine integrates his thoughts from previous works on the Holy Spirit: e.g.: from *Fides et Symbolo*, *Sermones*, *Epistulae* and *Io eu. trakt.* Especially in *Fides et Symbolo*, his doctrine is most developed. *Trin.* differs from these earlier works, in that it elaborates on the Holy Trinity by means of exploration of the human mind; the departure point of which is the *imago Dei* (Gen. 1:26) (Studer, *Trinitate*, 88-91).

34 Augustine's position in the 4th-5th century debate of *filioque*.

35 Augustine was the first church father to associate the Holy Spirit with love (Studer, *Trinitate*, 94).

36 Augustine uses the terms 'birth' and 'generation' apparently synonymously in *Trin.*

37 As he often does throughout *Trin.*, he stresses the necessity of faith in order to understand (i.e.: VII.6.12, VIII.8.12, IX.1.1, etc.) and explains the role of faith in obtaining wisdom (*Trin.* XII-XIII). See Studer, *Trinitate*, 93-94.

38 This question could be applied as well to Plotinus' account of the diverse movements in his theogony, such as turning *epistrophê* of the divine Intellect as well as the *Logos* as creative *energeia*, while the Plotinian Hypostases maintain their eternal, unchangeable character.

eternity (and eternally); the Holy Spirit flowed out from their love; yet the Spirit was only perceived as a 'gift' once the world and human beings came to existence. Seen in this way, no change ever occurred in God's existence or in the Trinitarian procession (VI.5.7).

In books V and VII, Augustine recognizes that there are serious translation difficulties regarding the divine Persons in association with divine Being from the Greek (*hypostasis*, *ousia*) to Latin *substantia* or *essentia*. His considerations of the Latin translation fill many pages of *Trin.*, yet for our purposes here, only a general summary will suffice.³⁹ He argues that we must conceive of God as a pure self-sustaining substance requiring no qualities or accidentals which would be mutable, transient or incidental to his Being. Everything said of God is *secundum substantiam* (V.3.4): in that sense, Love and Wisdom are substances as well. We can indeed speak of God in the category of relation (V.4.6), as in the relationship of the three divine Persons. God is also *caritas*, the mutual love between Father and Son which is the Holy Spirit. As such, all three Persons comprise substantial reality. Augustine argues that it is not possible that the Godhead encompasses more than three divine Persons. When there are two loving subjects, there exists love between them which is the third entity; this is the essential logic of divine life.⁴⁰ Therefore the Holy Trinity is made up of three metaphysical, intelligible entities who are not only equal in divinity, their unity is formed on the same ontological level and together they constitute one *essentia* (VII.1.1 and VII.3.6).⁴¹ Augustine's choice for translating the Greek terms three *hypostaseis* and one *ousia* as *substantia* and *essentia*, according to Van Geest, is related to his view on how humans can know God. Augustine continuously confirms that the *essentia* of God cannot be grasped. On the other hand, the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Christ as *formae substantiae* are intelligible. These are Forms through which the Being of God can be approached. The second eternal Person is less imaginable than the visual Son.⁴²

To briefly summarize: Augustine's study of the mission of the two individual Persons in the Trinity in books I-VII strives to prove that neither the Son or the Holy Spirit is inferior to the Father, but

39 Cf: e.g. *Trin.* V.1 and V.3.4. For the summary of this topic: Williams, *Trinitate*, 847.

It is generally assumed that Augustine is applying Latin terminology here such as *substantia* (Greek: *ousia*) and accidentals from Aristotle's doctrine of categories. There is much literature on Augustine's application of Aristotelian categories. See Studer, *Trinitate*, 136-138; Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 133-136; van Geest, *Incomprehensibility*, 147-149, 173; Lagouanère believes Augustine's source is Porphyry (*Interiorité*, 364).

Yet others suggest Plotinus as Augustine's source on Aristotelian categories, considering that Plotinus wrote lengthy commentaries on the categories, treating substance and being: *Enn.* VI.1, 2 and 3. Concerning Augustine's substantiation of personal attributes, O'Daly writes (referring to Lloyd's suggestion) that Augustine was perhaps thinking more along the lines of Plotinus' idea of *per se* activities involved in relations, which would correspond to Plotinus' critique of Aristotelian logic 'for failing to recognize a person, or substantial, property or activity...involved in every relation.' O'Daly is considering here *Enn.* VI.1.6. in which the one-many concept of Intellect is treated and described as a single essence that nonetheless contains plural relations. O'Daly concludes that this 'could well have served as a fruitful model of the Trinitarian essence and its internal relations in Augustine.' This seems plausible to me as well. O'Daly's provocative final comment, in agreement with Lloyd: 'Perhaps Augustine could not succeed in applying logical categories to Trinitarian mystery: but at least he tried.' (p.144). "Augustine's Use of the Category of Relation in *De Trinitate* V and VII" in: Bermon, O'Daly, *Le De Trinitate de saint Augustin*, 137-144; A.C. Lloyd, "On Augustine's Concept of a Person", in: R.A. Markus (ed.), *Augustine: A Collection of Critical Essays* (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1972), 191-205; 201; also Brachtendorf, (*Struktur*, 16-20, 23-24) and Lagouanère (*Intériorité*, 364) on the same subject.

40 Williams, "Trinitate", 848; see also Clark, "Trinitate", 91-102.

41 Williams, "Trinitate", 848; Augustine repeats this declaration in a summary of God's Son as Wisdom in XV.3.4 and Christ as Wisdom as in OUR wisdom in XIV.19.26. Also in differentiation to human knowledge: *scientia* and *sapientia*.

42 Van Geest, *Incomprehensibility*, 167; e.g.: *Trin.* IX.11.16 and V.10.11. Furthermore, van Geest asserts that Augustine continuously attempts to clarify that pondering about the Holy Trinity contributes to the increasing awareness of how human speech and thought infinitely differs from that of God (*Trin.* V.1.1). This is also stated by Plotinus (most evident in his depiction of the One) as well as by St. Paul, who says, we see God in a mirror and in enigmas (1 Cor. 13:12), a quote used often by Augustine in *Trin.* (*ibid*, 156).

that all three persons are of the same substance and perfectly equal. Further, he underscores that the divine Persons are not personified divine qualities. Because of the simplicity of the divine Being, they all share the same qualities. The divine attributes, such as Wisdom, Goodness and Love, are substances as well and not adjuncts to the divine essence. Although the Son is often referred to as Wisdom, especially in his role in revelation, the Son is no more or less wiser than the Father (VII.1.1-VII.3.6). Yet Augustine is not entirely satisfied with the terminology of substances and *personae* (VII.4.7). Nonetheless, this formulation is sufficient to serve as criteria for determining three elements of the human mind which show resemblance to divine Trinity. We will see how these criteria are put into operation at the end of Section 3.ii.

2.iv. *The Son (Word), Christ, as Perfect Image of God the Father*

Although Augustine's introduction to the subject 'image', as in the human image of God begins in the middle of book VII.(3.5) of *Trin.*, an aspect of utmost relevance to his exposition of the *imago Trinitatis* occurs in book IV, interwoven in the lengthy discussions on the relation of the Father to the Son.⁴³ Augustine explicates here how the human image of God relates to the Perfect Image of God, the second divine Person, the Son. This was the *Verbum Dei*, the Creator who manifested as Christ, which he had expounded in *Gen. litt* (Chapter IV.2).⁴⁴ The difference with his treatment in *Gen. litt* is that there, the Incarnation was mentioned only in passing in the context of the *Verbum Dei*. Now in *Trin.* IV, he gives a more formal, thorough explanation of how the eternal Word of God could have retained his divine nature in his truly physically human Incarnation. In doing so, he reminds us firstly that it was also Christ-the Word who directly created human souls (IV.1.3), and secondly, of his role in the purification and renewal of humans, which we recall, were important aspects in his exposition of *imago Dei* in *Gen. litt*. He clarifies further that Christ's Incarnation, his death and resurrection provide an example for humans to imitate (IV.3.5-6). Further in VI.10.11-12, he takes up this subject again, demonstrating his accordance with the thesis of Hilary, that the Son, being equal to the Father, is a Perfect Image of the Father.

*As regards the image (LZ: the Son of God), I suppose that he (LZ: Hilary) mentioned "form" on account of the beauty involved in such harmony, in that primordial equality and primordial likeness, where there is no discord and no inequality and no kind of unlikeness, but identical correspondence with that of which it is the image; where there is supreme and primordial life, such that it is not one thing to live and another to be, but being and living are the same; and where there is supreme and primordial understanding (primus ac summus intellectus) such that it is not one thing to understand (intellegere) and another to live, but understanding is identical with living, identical with all things, being as it were one perfect Word to which nothing is lacking, which is like the art of the almighty and wise God, full of all the living and unchanging ideas, which are all one in it, as it is one from the one with whom it is one.*⁴⁵ (*Trin.* VI.10.11)

43 This fact is mentioned here in order to underline the lack of validity in regarding *Trin.* as treating two separate themes: his theology of the Holy Trinity and the anthropology of the human image, treated respectively in I-VII and VII-XV. I agree with the researchers who claim the unified character of *Trin.* Both 'separate themes' are treated interdependently and have relevance in all books of the work.

44 Augustine also dealt with Christ as the Perfect Image of the Father in *Div. Qu.* 51 and *Gen. litt* I.4.9, following typical Greek theology (Clark, "Trinitate", 92). *Trin.* specifies more precisely the relationship between Christ-as equal Image to the Father and the human *imago Dei*.

45 All English translations here are Hill's, unless otherwise specified.

In this passage there are several important aspects being expressed which relate to his doctrine on how the human image relates to the Perfect one: 1. a foreshadowing of the trinities reflected in the human image illustrated with the trinity of the elements of Life, Being and Understanding, which he will develop in the upcoming books, 2. his application to solely the second Person the triad of Being, Life and Understanding (Thought). As such Christ is identified here with knowledge, understanding and intelligence, essentially no differently than in *Gen. litt.*, where Augustine expressed that He, as Creation and Form Principle, was the source of illumination and divine knowledge for the human intellect-image of God. Augustine's mentioning here of the divine Ideas in the Word is also significant in this context, in Christ's role of bringing the human intellect to contemplation of the Ideas. This exact combination is also found in Plotinus' second Hypostasis, *Nous*, -which Augustine, not coincidentally, mentioned in *Civ. Dei* X.28 in his positive appraisal of Platonism.⁴⁶ Plotinus' Intellect is the demiurge; its intelligible world, the Ideas, are the archetypes for all things in the world which encompassed the Intellect's Life, Being, Thought (See Chapter VI.2.iv.). What Augustine then proceeds to show is of utmost interest for his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* as well: first he states that God is omniscient and his knowledge of all things is eternal. Then:

*...that **inexpressible embrace**, so to say, of the **Father and the Image** (LZ = the Son) is not without enjoyment, without charity without happiness. So this love, delight, felicity or blessedness (if any human word can be found that is good enough to express it) he (LZ: Hilary) calls very briefly 'use' and it is **the Holy Spirit in the triad**, (LZ: trinity) not begotten, but the sweetness of begetter and begotten **pervading all creatures** according to their capacity with its vast generosity and fruitfulness, that they might all keep their right order and rest in their right places. 12. Thus all these things around us that the divine art has made reveal in themselves a certain **unity and form and order**. Any one of them you like is both some one thing, like the **various kinds of bodies and temperaments of souls**; and it is fashioned in some form, like the shapes and qualities of bodies and the sciences or skills of the soul; and it seeks or maintains some kind of order, like the weights or proper places of bodies and the loves and pleasure of souls... (Trin. VI.10.11)*

In mentioning the knowledge of God here as something eternal, he turns to the eternal love between the Father and the Image, which manifests in the Holy Spirit. He then explains that the divine Trinity *pervades all creatures* (these contain 'trinities' as well: the human mind especially), as in *various kinds of bodies and temperaments of the souls*. As such, the 'Trinity of Love' exists in all things –it encompasses the *unity of form and order*. With these words, he is laying the foundation of his extensive treatment in books VIII-X: of the relationship of love in the Persons of the Holy Trinity as a paradigm for the human *imago Trinitatis* and its own love and knowledge. Further on in *Trin.*, Augustine will explain how this subtle and differentiated picture of the Godhead relates to imaging in the human intellect. This will include explaining the role of Christ in bringing the intellect to see in itself these designations of the Holy Trinity (XIV.14.20, XV.11.20, etc.).

This is a good moment to briefly collect together the main points which have been dealt with in this subsection which will be of importance to his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis*, especially in the contexts of epistemology (section 3.iii.) and the ascent (4.ii.a.). The human image of God is not only an image of the Perfect Image, the Son, the Creator and the Word of God, but also of his Incarnation (VII.3.5). The Perfect Image in the latter manifestation serves as model for mankind, for example, for the resurrection in the afterlife when human images will become equal to Christ's Incarnation (IV.3.6,

46 Treated in Chapter II.2.iii.h and Chapter III.2.ii.b, e.g.: *Enn.* V.1.4.25-30.

XV.11.20-21). All of creation was made by the entire Trinity. Thus, it follows that the human image of God is also an image of the Trinity of which the Perfect Image is only a part (VII.6.12, XV.20.39).⁴⁷

For the sake of the completeness of this synthesis, a few other important aspects of Augustine's Trinitarian doctrine are noteworthy. First of all, it is not only the Holy Trinity in Augustine's thinking who bears a triune structure, but also Christ the second Person, as stated in the quote above (VI.10.11-12). Secondly, as we have already seen, Augustine posits as well that the Holy Trinity in its totality, is completely immaterial, non-created and infinite (VI.10.12). These statements do not however appear reconcilable with the Incarnation. Thus he justifies this in closing book VII: '*There must be neither confusion or mixing up of the persons, nor such distinction of them as may imply any disparity. If this cannot be grasped by understanding, let it be held by faith, until he shines in our minds who said through the prophet, "Unless you believe you will not understand". (Is 7:9)*' (VII.6.12). Hence, in regard to the three divine entities -and two with different missions- being perfectly equal,- as well as to how an entity can bring forth another entity (or other entities) which are perfectly equal to the conceivers-, he stresses that these notions are not able to be grasped with a materially oriented mind. The physical senses are unable to perceive immaterial, unchangeable and eternal realities and therefore are unable to directly grasp ultimate truths (VIII.1.2). Even the immaterial consciousness of the image of God-intellect cannot fully grasp of the reality of the divine Trinity, as the Trinity is ineffable and beyond the mind's comprehension (XV.23.44 and 24). The importance Augustine attaches to having faith in order understand something which is essentially incomprehensible will be discussed again in this chapter in section 2.vii. ('God is Intelligible and Incomprehensible') and 3.iii.g.

2.v. God is Love and Good

Another important aspect of the Godhead for this study is Augustine's designation of God as Love,⁴⁸ which is expressed in, for instance, 1 John 4:8. Augustine initiates this topic in *Trin.* VIII.3.4 by stating: '*You certainly only love what is good.*', because what one loves can be nothing other than what one deems to be good. We judge things to be good, he says, or that one thing is better than the other, and believe our judgment to be true, because we are already familiar with an existing notion or standard of what good is. From this notion we evaluate things and approve or prefer one thing over another. This standard of Good pertains to the divine Idea of Good. God is pure Good. '*This is how we should love God, not this or that good but Good itself, and we should seek the good of the soul, not the good it can hover over in judgment but the good it can cleave to in love and what is this but God?*' (VIII.3.4)

Loving God therefore begins with loving what is good. But what is the Good and how does a human being become good? His response: by turning (*conversio*) to God because God is Good. Hence Augustine is exploring here the conception of God in the sense of how we can 'see' or understand God: as Goodness itself, the Form 'Good' (VIII.3.6). These points correspond to his doctrine of *imago Dei* in *Gen. litt.*, that all Forms exist in the *Verbum Dei*, the eternal Son '*In the form of God, all things were made by him...*' (Jn. 1:3)' (I.11.22). Seeing God is only possible in the *imago Dei* -the *mens*- the highest part of the mind where the Ideas can be contemplated. That one can love God by loving love itself, which is associated with the Holy Spirit, is an important element in his Trinitarian doctrine.

47 See *Trin.* XII.6.7 in which Augustine expresses his critique of an interpretation of Gen. 1:26 as man being solely created by the Father in the image of the Son.

48 Cf.: *Conf.* X.6.8 '*What do I love when I love thee?...*'

2.vi. The Holy Spirit and the Holy Trinity is Love

In XV.17.28, Augustine returns to the verses 'God is Love' and 'God is Spirit' (1 John 4-6) from *Trin.* VIII-IX. He sets out to re-affirm the existence of the Holy Spirit, because, he maintains, the Scriptures themselves do not provide an adequate clarification. In doing so, he makes the following analogy: in the same way that Christ in the Holy Trinity is identified with Wisdom and Truth, the Holy Spirit is associated with Love. Yet one must keep in mind that all Trinitarian persons are equal and the whole Trinity is Love and Wisdom.⁴⁹ He reiterates the origin of divine Love as the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit is a result of the generation of Love between God the Father and the Son, as exemplified in the quote below.

Nothing is more excellent than this gift of God. (LZ: love from the Holy Spirit) This alone is what distinguishes between the sons of the eternal kingdom and the sons of eternal perdition. Other endowments too are given through the Spirit, but without charity they are of no use. Unless therefore the Holy Spirit is imparted to someone to make him a lover of God and neighbor, he cannot transfer from the left hand to the right. Why is the Spirit distinctively called gift? ... if a man has this love or charity (dilectio sive caritas)(they are two names for one thing)....it brings him home to the kingdom; yes, even faith is only rendered of any use for this purpose of charity. Faith there can indeed be without charity, but it cannot be of any use. ... So the love which is from God and is God is distinctively the Holy Spirit, through him the charity of God is poured out into our hearts and through it the whole triad (LZ: memoria-intellegentia-amor- n.b. which is the best representation of the imago Dei) dwells in us. This is the reason why it is most appropriate that the Holy Spirit, while being God, should also be called the gift of God. And this gift surely, is distinctively to be understood as being the charity which brings us to God, without which no other gift of God at all can bring us through to God." (XV.18.32) (also XV.19.37).

In this citation, Augustine explains the mission of the Holy Spirit as pouring love into human hearts which enables us to love our neighbor and others.⁵⁰ God's Love from the Holy Spirit is emphatically that which will bring us to God (or to God's Love). This is of such importance, he says, that not even something essential as strong faith, which he stated earlier is essential for all understanding and which is also essential in order to be able to love God, or even other gifts of God, will do anyone any good if there is no love involved in it (quoting 1 Cor. 13:1-3).

Certain correspondences from the *Enneads* can be detected in Augustine's description of the Holy Spirit. The love and desire of the divine Intellect for its source, the One, is a paradigm for human love which desires the love beyond oneself. The One in Plotinus is the source of all love and beauty. Augustine designates God as the origin of all beauty as well (*Trin.* XV.2.3) (See Chapter VI.2.vi.) The designation of the Holy Spirit as Love will be of importance to Augustine's delineation of the *imago Trinitatis* as composed of the triad mind-knowledge-love and how the human image can image the divine Trinity. This was especially indicated in the quote above: 'So the love which is from God and God is distinctly the Holy Spirit; through Him the charity of God is poured into our hearts and through it the whole triad dwells in us.' (XV.18.32)

49 *Trin.* XV.17.31: 'Just then as we distinctly call the Word of God by the name of wisdom, although the Holy Spirit and the Father are also wisdom in a general sense, so the Spirit is distinctly called by the term charity although both the Father and the Son are charity in a general sense.'

50 Reinforced by this powerful passage: 'So it is God the Holy Spirit proceeding from God who fires man to the love of God and neighbor when he has been given to him and he himself is love. Man has no capacity to love God except from God. That is why he (LZ: John = 1 John 4:8.16) says a little later: Let us love because he first loved us...' (XV.17.31)

2.vii. Synthesis: God is Intelligible and Incomprehensible

Augustine demonstrates in *Trin.* VIII-IX how God is intelligible to the human mind. He can be conceived in contemplating the Ideas, Forms, the eternal principles (which exist in His mind) such as the Good and Justice which are within the grasp of the human mind (VIII). Further, he describes that which is called 'Life in God' as Being and Understanding. This 'Understanding' is God's Wisdom which characterizes the second Trinitarian Person (XV.5.7). Further Augustine will show in his anthropology (in section 3) that a certain degree of our knowledge of God comes through our own acquired knowledge of the human mind, which is imprinted there (for example in *Trin.* XV.5.7). Additionally, knowledge of God and his Wisdom can be obtained through reading of Christ's life in the Scriptures. God is intelligible through our reason facility or through our intuition -or as in a mirror- but in this life we are only capable of seeing God as through dark glass and enigmas.⁵¹ Yet he also states that God's Wisdom is ultimately incomprehensible for humans (XV.7.13)⁵² The Holy Trinity in its singularity and magnitude is likewise ultimately unimaginable for the human mind accustomed to the multiplicity of itself and of the world. The Holy Trinity, which is beyond temporal and especially discursive thinking, is therefore ineffable.⁵³

So then, to direct our gaze to the Creator by understanding the things that are made (Rom 1:20), we should understand him as a triad (LZ: the Trinity) whose traces⁵⁴ appear in creation in a way that is fitting. In that supreme triad is the source of all things, and the most perfect beauty and wholly blissful delight. Those three seem both to be bounded or determined by each other, and yet in themselves to be unbounded and infinite... (VI.10.12).

In this passage, Augustine is relaying the perception of supreme beauty and wholly blissful delight in a divine vision, gazing at the Creator, the Holy Trinity, which is unbounded and infinite. Admittedly, the passage above is one of the few times he expresses the infinite character of the divine Trinity in *Trin.* These statements echo without doubt Plotinus' remarks on the One, as a monistic principle and the origin of beauty and love, which is indescribable yet experienced in bliss and ecstasy (Chapter III.4.v. and VI.4.iii.b.). Augustine confirms that the *essentia* of God cannot be grasped; on the other

51 XV.20.39; 1 Cor.13:12 '12.For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.' Translation: <https://www.biblegateway.com/>. 2015./ Van Fleteren comments: 'Augustine concludes that only knowledge *per speculum et in aenigmate* is allotted to humans below. The Pauline "mirror" refers to burnished metal upon which an image is reflected ...images...not distinct and clear. To Augustine the rhetor, an *aenigma* is a figure of speech, a likeness *similitudo*... but a distant one.' Van Fleteren correctly indicates the intricate association here between the *imago Dei* in Augustine's doctrine and *per speculum et in aenigmate*., "The Ascent to God", AttA, 63-67; 66.

52 'Then how can this wisdom by which God knows all things, in such a way that what is called the future, is not being waited for to happen as though it were not there yet, but things past and future are all present with things present; and things are not thought about one for one, with thought moving from one to another, but all things grasped in one glance or view; how, I say, can any man comprehend this wisdom, which is simultaneously prudence, (Hill: "God's wisdom"), simultaneously knowledge, seeing that we cannot even comprehend our own?...from myself indeed I understand how wonderful and incomprehensible is your knowledge with which you have made me, seeing that I am not even able to comprehend myself whom you have made; and yet a fire burns up in my meditation (Ps. 29:3), causing me to seek your face always (Ps. 105:4).' (XV.7.13) (McKenna)

53 e.g.: XV.14.24; XV.27.49-50; van Geest, *Incomprehensibility*, 145-174: 'Augustine seems to continuously intertwine the affirmative with the apophatic in speaking of God, so that he ultimately attains a salvific uncertainty rather than attaining a certain knowledge which could lead to conceit.' [My translation from the Dutch: *Stellig maar onzeker, Augustinus' benadering van God* (Budel: Damon, 2007, 2nd ed. 2008), 176.]

54 Hill translates the Latin term *vestigium* as 'trace', Sullivan as 'vestiges' (Sullivan, *Image of God*, 87-88). For more on Augustine's definition of 'image', see Chapter IV.2.viii.

hand, the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Christ, *formae substantiae*, the substance of God -which includes the Forms, are indeed intelligible.⁵⁵

In affirming the ultimate incomprehensibility of the Holy Trinity, Augustine is ironically continuously supplying the reader of *Trin.* with more intelligible knowledge of God. In addition to the assertions above, he includes that our minds can conceive of the notion of unity but not the Trinity itself (see section 4.ii.d 'God's Intelligibility and Incomprehensibility' and 4.iii. on the ascent). Augustine distinguishes between our present knowledge of God as Holy Trinity and the knowledge acquired as a *visio Dei* in the afterlife. Due to the unfathomable character of God, he stresses the importance of faith to lead the mind to the eventual understanding of truth (VII.4.7; XV.6.10); we must first believe that God or the Trinity is the highest Good and that God is the Trinity of Love in order to experience this as such. He acknowledges the difficulty of seeing the Holy Trinity in oneself as the image of God (XV.50) (see section 4.iii).⁵⁶ What can the mind then perceive of the Holy Trinity? The Holy Trinity is beyond our intellectual grasp...just as we are to ourselves (XV.7.12-13). Augustine compensates for this claim by advancing his view of obtaining knowledge of God beyond our present knowledge through the activities of love, desire and longing for God.⁵⁷ Here, he exploits the biblical motif of 'searching and finding' and the activity of prayer which will continuously bring us closer to God (VIII.1.1, XV.1-2). These are aspects directly related to his notion of love and knowledge in his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* and then, the ascent.

The last point to highlight in this synthesis is Augustine's claim that if God is unchanging, self-maintaining eternal Goodness and Wisdom and the source of all, then such a reality cannot be described as divine unless this *entire* reality is divine. Divinity consists of an equal unity; no hierarchic levels of godliness exist in his doctrine as in Neo-Platonist philosophy. Augustine's assertions on the Godhead entail a paradox: each divine Person must be irreducibly fully God and yet each must be inseparably the one God with the other two. Thus in saying there are three Persons, there are not three Gods involved.⁵⁸ *Trin.* VII and onwards will be devoted to the challenge of this explication. Chapter 12 of *Trin.* VII. represents in a certain way a turning point in his exposition on the Holy Trinity. Here he addresses Genesis 1: 26-27, our passage that man was created to the image of God.

3. Augustine's Doctrine of the *Imago Trinitatis*: Knowledge and Love

3.i. Introduction

In *Gen. litt.* Augustine highlighted the importance of obtaining divine knowledge in his doctrine of the image of God. The theme love hardly came into the picture. Yet in *Trin.* Augustine attributes great importance to this aspect. His notion of *amor* is not only fused with his conception of will (*voluntas*) but most importantly, with the elements of knowledge (*notitia*) and truth (*verbum*) (*Trin.* VIII-X). Thus, compared to his treatment in *Gen. litt.*, Augustine's doctrine of love brings a new perspective to his doctrine of the *imago Dei* and raises a crop of new questions. For instance, concerning the love relationship between the human image and the Holy Trinity, how this relationship can develop in this life, as well as to what extent love can unify the human image and the Holy Trinity which it images.

55 Van Geest, *Incomprehensibility*, 147-148, 155-160, 166; M. Wisse's departure point is Augustine's view on God as entailing exclusively incomprehensibility. *Participation*, 11-12.

56 At times, rather emphatically: 'Come see if you can...stay there if you can. But you cannot.' VIII.2.3. Augustine repeats in XV.27.50 that he himself was not capable.

57 XV.17.31-18.32.

58 Ayres, "Faith and reason" CCA 2014, 74-75.

For this reason, section 3 on the *imago Trinitatis* will be divided into three main parts: first, a general exposition on Augustine's treatment of the *imago Trinitatis* (ii.); then it will deal with the two specific aspects of his doctrine in question here, namely, his epistemology -the element knowledge (iii.) and the element love (iv.). A few words of introduction concerning the treatment in this chapter are necessary before proceeding further.

In the preceding Chapters III (on Plotinus) and IV (on Augustine and his doctrine of creation), the doctrines of the image of God were treated in their respective cosmologies and laid out in a fairly uncomplicated manner. Yet Augustine's doctrine of the image of God in his work *Trin.* presents some knotty organizational difficulties. First of all, there is no cosmology in *Trin.* Yet the same aspects of imaging dealt with in *Gen. litt* XII return in *Trin.*: firstly, the imaging taking place within the human mind itself and secondly, the imaging of the divine. In *Trin.*, compared to his treatment in *Gen. litt*, Augustine is especially preoccupied with the question of *how* the image of God reflects the divine. Hence Augustine expands his notion of imaging in *Trin.* in a number of different ways. The differences between his treatments of the image of God in *Gen. litt* and *Trin.* was touched upon in section I.i. of this chapter, but now we must confront other factors which bear direct consequences for the treatment in this section.

The two main aspects of the image of God which interest us here, the elements of knowledge and love, as noted above, are fused together in books VIII-X. In the exposition on Plotinus' epistemology and ascent, we saw that these elements were not woven together so tightly in Plotinus', as to make a separate documentation of them difficult. Yet this is indeed the case with Augustine. Thus this study demands an artificial separation of the two elements in order to facilitate the comparison with Plotinus' notions of knowledge and love in Chapter VI. This means, of course, that in the separate sections on knowledge and love, certain redundancies are unavoidable. This is especially apparent in the treatment of the true knowledge (*verbum*) which directly involves both elements knowledge and love.

Another difficulty presents itself here as well –whether it is handy to follow Augustine's own order of treatment in *Trin.* in dealing with the elements knowledge and love. Augustine's order of treatment does not always make a great deal of sense. In books VIII-X, he searches for the trinities in the mind -the rational soul- which best represent the image of the Holy Trinity. Then at the inception of book XI, he makes a puzzling turn: he explains the distinction inner and outer man in certain verses of Paul's letters⁵⁹ and announces his intention to discuss the outer man, who is predominantly involved with sense perception. This represents, as it were, a "step down" from the general context of the triads in the higher mind in books VIII-X. He then proceeds to explore various trinities in the outer man and in doing so, returns to the subject of material images, which he treated in *Gen. litt.* in corporeal and spiritual visions.⁶⁰ Here he takes the opportunity to expound his theory of vestiges or signs within the framework of his study of intramental, material triads. This exposition is of interest to this study, because his notion of vestiges and the perception of vestiges in the outer world display a direct correspondence to Plotinus' doctrine of images and imaging, -not only evident in the philosopher's cosmology, but also in his epistemology. Augustine's underlying motive in books XI-XII is to finally complete the task of further differentiating what exactly pertains to the image of God in those triadic elements he discussed in books VIII-X. His conclusion in *Trin.* XI is that the triads he depicted in the outer man involving material images cannot pertain to the image of God. This should not come as a surprise when we recall Augustine's theory of three visions in *Gen. litt* XII, because

59 Col. 3:10 and 2 Cor. 4:16

60 In *Trin.* VIII.6.9 and IX.6.10, the term *verba* was translated as 'words' or 'thoughts'.

there he depicted intellectual vision as an illuminated spirit purified of these material images.

Augustine's discussion of intramental images in book XI is essential for the comprehension of his further treatment in XII-XIII, where crucial aspects of his epistemology are revealed. There he distinguishes two areas in the rational soul, deploying a new terminology: *ratio inferior* and *superior*, and two kinds of knowledge: (*scientia* and *sapientia*). Compared to *Gen. litt*, these are novelties: here we note a sure course of development of his doctrine of the image of God from *Gen. litt* to *Trin*. Yet of utmost importance here is that by differentiating two areas of the rational soul and two kinds of knowledge, he is linking his epistemology even closer to that of Plotinus. In order to accommodate these complications, the first part of section 3 will provide a broad overview of Augustine's doctrine of the image of God in *Trin*. This will predominantly revolve around his analysis of the trinities in the human mind. It will explain Augustine's intentions and the context which will aid the understanding of his analysis of the human trinities to be examined later in this chapter.

Initially, his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* will be treated in the order of presentation in *Trin*. in subsections c.-e. This will start with book VII, where Genesis 1:26-27 is mentioned in the context of the human image of God. A prelude to the triads in the *imago Trinitatis* in book VIII -where we can search for the Holy Trinity- will be given in (b.), followed by a summary of Augustine's analysis of the triads themselves (c.). Halfway through point (c.), the exposition will broaden out to mention briefly certain extensions of the triadic elements (such as *verbum*, memory, etc.), which will also be relevant in upcoming sections (iii. and iv.) and treated in more detail. Thereafter additional general facets of the mental trinities will be taken into account, such as: the object of the trinities in point (d.). Then point (e.) will demonstrate how Augustine fuses self-love with self-knowledge in books IX-X. The final subsection (f.) is an essay explicating the two terms, knowledge and love, in view of modern definitions, such as 'consciousness' which are employed in this study to circumscribe and interpret what this researcher believes Augustine intended for us to understand.

3.ii. Augustine's General Treatment of the Imago Trinitatis

3.ii.a. The Image of God⁶¹ (Trin. VII)

The first mentioning of the image of God in *Trin*. is VII.3.5, in the context of the discussion of wisdom.⁶²

For we too are the image of God, though not the equal one like him; we are made by the Father through the Son, not born of the Father like that image, we are image because we are illuminated

61 Secondary sources on the *imago Dei/Trinitatis* in *Trin*.: Ayres, *Augustine, Trinity*; Brachtendorf, *Struktur*; *ibid*, "Der menschlichen Geist als Bild des trinitarischen Gottes-Ähnlichkeiten und Unähnlichkeiten" (in: *Gott, Bild*) 155-172; É. Gilson, *Introduction a l'Étude de Saint Augustin*, (Paris: Librairie Philosophique, J. Vrin, 1982,) 265-275. (There are many different editions: 1929, 1943, 1969 (4^e ed), 1982); A. Louth, *The Origins of Christian Mystical Tradition From Plato to Denys*, (Oxford: University Press, 1981, 2007), 147-150; G. Madec, *Saint Augustin et la Philosophie, Notes Critiques*, (Paris; Institut de Études Augustiniennes, 1996); A. MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy and Universities A Selective History of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition*, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publ., 2009) 21-32; Sullivan, *Image of God*; T.J. van Bavel, (Although this is a Dutch publication, I include this here because of van Bavel's helpful introduction with extensive notes.) *Augustinus van Hippo Over de Drie-eenheid* ingeleid en vertaald door T.J. van Bavel (Louvain: Peeters, 2005); C. Y. Yam, with A. Dupont, "A Mind-Centered Approach of *Imago Dei*. A Dynamic Construction in Augustine's *De Trinitate* XIV", *Augustiniana* 62 (2012) 7-43; *ibid*, "The Role of *imago Dei* in Augustine's Speaking of Trinity. A Study of the Neglected Book XV *De Trinitate*", *La Ciudad de Dios*, 225 (2012), 325-359.

62 Augustine inquires why Wisdom in scripture is almost always attributed to the Son. He suggests that it is because it is the Son who reveals the Father to us, and because our wisdom is to imitate the Incarnate Son (because we are images of Him), just as the Eternal Word imitates the Father, as image of the Father (VII.2.3-4.7). He thereafter concludes that Wisdom is a substance and not a relational attribute. See Hill's summary of VII.2, (*Trinity*, 225).

*with light; that one is so because it is the light which illuminates, and therefore it provides a model for us without having a model itself....But we, by pressing on, imitate him, who abides motionless; we follow him who stands still, and by walking in him we move toward him, because for us he became a road or way in time **by his humility**, while being for us an eternal abode by his divinity. (VII.3.5)*

By beginning his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* with these words, Augustine takes up where he left off in *Gen. litt.* He is associating the human image of God with its model, the Son of God, Christ, the Perfect Image, who is the source of our illumination and formation and is our destination as well (see section 2.iv. where this was discussed). In assimilating divine Wisdom through his Light, humans realize their relationship to the Creator, as his image. As in *Conf.*, he stresses here that humility plays a major role in the imitation of the life of Christ and in ascending to his eternal existence as the Son of God, Word of God equal to the Father. He is also engaged here in a discussion of the relational reality between the Father and the Son -the Image of the Father, and in the midst of this, he returns to themes mentioned in *Gen. litt.* concerning the image of God. For instance, that God is sometimes mentioned in Scripture in the plural (*Trin.* VII.6.12) such as in Genesis 1:26: ‘*Let us make man to our image and likeness.*’ The words ‘*Let us*’ and ‘*our*’ are indicators of such a relationship, for it was not ‘*God*’ in the sense of one divine entity as Creator, but three divine Persons in unity; thus it was the three Persons who made man according to their image. Just as in his doctrine of the *imago Dei* in *Gen. litt.*, he refers here readily and repeatedly to statements of St. Paul. For example: ‘*man as the image and glory of God*’ (1 Cor. 11:7); ‘*Be refashioned in the newness of your mind*’ (Rom. 1:22) ‘*Be therefore imitators of God*’ (Eph. 5:1); and also in reference to the new man: ‘*who is being renewed for the recognition (LZ: knowledge) of God according to the image of him who created Him.*’ (Col. 3:10). Then he reveals his conclusion, -not unlike his conclusions in *Gen. litt* and *Conf.*- that the human image of God bears an unequal resemblance to the Holy Trinity. ‘*...man is said to be “to the image”...to show that man is the image of the Trinity; not equal to the Trinity as the Son is equal to the Father, but approaching it, as has been said, by a certain likeness...a sort of imitation.*’ (VII.6.12).

These statements serve as departure points for his doctrinal expansion from *imago Dei* to *imago Trinitatis*. Indeed, a certain closeness exists in the relationship between man and the Holy Trinity, he repeats, yet as we will soon see, there seems to be for Augustine a conceptually greater distance between the human image and *Trinitas* than the image to *Deus*. Bridging this gap to God, as he stated in *Gen. litt.*, was effectuated by renewing the image according to the knowledge of God. Now his explanation of how the image reflects the Holy Trinity must postulate the triune character of the human image-intellect.

3.ii.b. A Prelude to the Study of Triads in the *Imago Trinitatis* (*Trin.* VII-VIII)

In the prologue of book VIII, Augustine prays to God to open the readers’ minds for understanding his next topic: the relational reality of the Trinity:

*All this has been said...we must...beseech God as devoutly and earnestly as we can to open our understanding and temper our fondness for controversy, so that our minds may be able to perceive the essence or being of truth without any mass, without any changeableness. Now therefore, as far as the wonderfully merciful Creator may assist us, let us turn our attention to the things we are going to discuss **in a more inward manner** than the things that have been discussed above, though in fact, **they are the same things**; but let us all the while still keep to the rule that **just because a thing is not yet clear to our understanding we must not therefore dismiss it from the firm assent of our faith.** (VIII.1.2)*

Augustine announces that he now intends to discuss the essentially same subjects from the previous books on the Godhead which were difficult to fathom. These were: how can three entities -and two with different missions- be perfectly equal? And how can an entity bring forth another entity (-ies) which are perfectly equal to the conceiver? He reminds again that this cannot be grasped with a materially oriented mind: physical senses cannot perceive what is immaterial, unchangeable and eternal; they simply cannot grasp ultimate truth (VIII.1.2). Yet the present lack of understanding should not discourage us. Instead one must search further: to proceed *in a more inward manner*.⁶³ There is only one place to find it: in the highest part of the mind – which was designated as the immaterial image of God or rational soul in *Gen. litt.* Although the human mind cannot be compared to the greatness and truth of the Holy Trinity, Augustine invites the reader to try to see God:

*Come see if you can, O 'soul weighed down with the body that decays' (Wis. 9:15) and burdened with many and variable earthly thoughts, come and see it if you can-God's truth. For it is written that **God is Light** (1 John 1:5) not such as these eyes see, but as the mind sees when it hears 'He is truth'. Do not ask what truth is; immediately **a fog of bodily images and a cloud of fancies** will get in your way and disturb the bright fair weather that burst on you the first instant when I said "truth". Come, hold it in that first moment in which so to speak you caught a flash from the corner of your eye when the word "truth" was spoken, **stay there if you can. But you cannot, you slide back into these familiar and earthly things. And what weight is it, I ask, that drags you back but the birdlime of greed for the dirty junk you have picked up on your wayward wanderings?***
(VIII.2.3)

These are familiar statements which were referred to in *Conf.* or *Gen. litt.*, pointing to the frustrating incapability to remain in concentration of God's Light. It seems as if he is depicting a failure here. Yet ironically, his discussion then leads to how God is intelligible for humans, on which he elaborates in the rest of the book. The general subject is divine love: 'seeing God', he says, is truly the same as loving God, which is no different than loving the Form. (VIII.3.6) (See section 2.v). This includes an introduction to his first mental triads, which likewise revolve around love. From this point onwards, Augustine's arrangement of subject matter concerning knowledge and love becomes complex. For all practical purposes, the following section will give a résumé of Augustine's treatment of the intramental trinities in books VIII-X in *Trin.*

3.ii.c. Augustine's Analysis of the Human Mental Trinities (*Trin.* IX-X; XII-XV)⁶⁴

The analysis of the human mind is motivated by an inquiry: if God is to be understood as a Trinity, what are the trinities which can be found in the human mind?⁶⁵ Throughout *Trin.*, Augustine will

63 Augustine's method here of the human mind turning inward to find the Holy Trinity, or using the passage in *Gen.* I.26-27 about the image of God in order to explain the Holy Trinity has not always been received with appreciation by theologians. Cf.: L. Schumacher, "The Theo-logic of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge by Divine Illumination", *Augustinian Studies*, 41:2 (2010), 375-399, note 49. Augustine's approach in *Trin.* is different than his other treatments of the divine Trinity, such as *De fides et symbolo*.

64 For treatment on the triads see Sullivan, *Image of God*, ch.'s 3 and 4; Hill, *Trinity*, 258-265; Hendriks, *BA* 15 "Les images de la Trinité", 586-590; 18. "La trinité mens, notitia, amor", 593-594; Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 118-148; Gilson, *Introduction*, 283-294; Schumacher, "Theo-logic", 388-394.

65 Note in this and the upcoming triads the similarity with classical dialectic from Greek philosophy-thesis-antithesis-synthesis. Augustine himself wrote a treatise entitled *De Dialectica*. Brachtendorf treats this in the framework of the inner word (*Struktur*, 286-288). This dialectic recalls Plotinus, see Chapter VI.3.iii.b for further comments.

prove that there are in fact countless trinities in the human mind.⁶⁶ His inquiry must therefore necessarily be refined to which mental trinities ultimately merit the designation of an 'image of God as Trinity' (IX.2.2). Augustine bases the characteristics of a true trinity in the human mind on the qualifications of the Trinity which were introduced in books I-VII. To recapitulate, these were, firstly: in the divine Holy Trinity, all three Persons were equal in substance. Secondly, within the Holy Trinity, the following relational constellation existed: the Father who generated the Son. Deriving from the love between the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit was generated, as transcendent Love, the unifying factor between the first two. Subsequently, Augustine now searches for the same analogy⁶⁷ which included appropriated qualifications of the Holy Trinity in the human mind. This is a tedious and exigent task.

Essentially the criteria which Augustine maintains while looking for the perfect, albeit the best intellectual image, dictate that there must be three substances in the human mind collaborating as a trio, approaching the same relational pattern of the Holy Trinity. This entails the primary condition of one aspect being brought forth from the other, while the third party, a product of the first two, binds these two together. Together the three elements must be of equal substantive value and ideally function in unity as one essence. In addition to these conditions, we must keep in mind a continuously emphasized aspect by Augustine: God is completely immaterial; hence an adequate trinity existing in the rational human soul must necessarily be completely immaterial as well. As explained in *Gen. litt* XII, it is only the intellect which can be free from temporally oriented material images, physicality and worldliness.

In saying this, it is not the intention here to give a complete rendition of the finer points of Augustine's argumentations concerning how the particular aspects in the triads do or do not comply with these conditions.⁶⁸ Nor of his judgments on whether or not the triads are candidates for meriting the designation perfect 'image of God.' For, in fact, the majority of trinities he analyzes do not meet the criteria. For example, if they are not completely immaterial or pertain to the 'outer man.'

Instead we will summarize briefly the most important points regarding the triads in his analysis. As in *Gen. litt*, Augustine employs the term *mens* to signify the rational soul.⁶⁹ In *Trin.* VII, Augustine establishes that the *mens*, in the higher consciousness of the *imago Dei*,⁷⁰ forms a triad with the two elements: knowledge *notitia* and love *amor*, collaborating in unity. This trinity is expressed as mind-knowledge-love (*mens-notitia- amor*), which forms the crux of his analysis, as well as the basis of successive trinities. In books X-XIII,⁷¹ he will explain how the term *mens* encompasses the

66 Yet this does not imply that the human mind is infinite. Material images furnish a false self-image: *Trin.* XI.8, X.5.7-8.11, XV.7.3; *Conf.* X.17.26.

67 On Augustine's perusal of analogy: see A. Schindler, *Wort und Analogie in Augustins Trinitätslehre*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1965). Schindler discusses different possible sources for analogies for Augustine (pp. 43-60), suggesting *Enn.* IV.3.28, 10-19 for *Trin.* XI.12 (on *memoria*). See Chapter VI.3.iii.b on source questions of Augustine's employment of triads. Lagouanère, *Intériorité*, 448-506.

68 For more detail, see Sullivan, *Image of God*, ch.'s 3 and 4. Actually, all the trinities in inner man revolve around essentially the same conceptions: mind=*mens*, *memoria*; knowledge-understanding=*notitia*, *verbum*; love-wil=*amor*/*voluntas*. Examples of inner trinities: 1. *memoria-voluntas-amor* / 2. *memoria-intelligentia-voluntas* / 3. *mens-notitia-amor* / 4. *memoria sui-intelligentia sui-amor sui* / 5. *memoria Dei-intelligentia Dei-amor Dei*.

69 Besides *mens* he also uses in *Trin.* the terms *anima* and *animus*: the *animus* is the rational soul. *Anima* refers to soul in a general sense. Cf. J. Moingt, BA 16, Notes Complémentaires no. 9, 581-582.

70 See notes 79, 95-98 on the term 'consciousness'. Also in section 3.ii.f.: 'Excursus on Love and Knowledge...'. The statement above reflects my personal interpretation of Augustine's triads: that they occur within the higher consciousness which Augustine designates as *imago Dei/Trinitatis* and thus delineate this consciousness as well.

71 e.g.: X.11.17, 12.19-XI.3.6, 8.13, 11.18, XII.15.24-25.

conception of *memoria*. Memory consists of thinking of, or recalling or remembering oneself as in self-reflection. Augustine combines this element as well with the elements of knowledge and love, to evolve the triad to self-understanding and self-loving (willing). Thus, the terminology of the triad *mens-notitia-amor* from *Trin.* IX will be replaced in book X with '*memoria*' to result in the triad of *memoria-intellegentia-amor/voluntas*: self-consciousness, self-understanding and self-love/willing. In this trinity, the elements *amor* and *voluntas* are equivalent.⁷² The will here is synonymous with love, however he applies other aspects to *voluntas*, such as the intention of one's gaze or attention, which is essential for acquiring knowledge (*Trin.* XI). This new terminology of the human trinity, Augustine will claim, best exemplifies the image of God. The two trinities, which will be the subject of upcoming discussions in this chapter, function as such: in the first place, the mind reflects upon itself, -in this sense, 'recalls oneself'. In doing so, the mind brings forth knowledge-self-knowledge (as in 'understanding oneself').⁷³ Knowledge is bound to the mind through the third element, love—as in loving oneself and loving (or approving of) one's knowledge of oneself.⁷⁴ In effect, this triad forms an analogy to the Holy Trinitarian procession. As evident here, Augustine explicitly fuses the aspect of knowledge with the element of love in a close unity.

While establishing the triads best suited for the image of God, Augustine expands his analysis to the 'self'. Self-knowledge was already introduced briefly in *Gen. litt.* VII.21.28 as the whole presence of the self to oneself.⁷⁵ In *Conf.* X Augustine analyzed the inner recesses of the mind as well. But now in books VIII-X of *Trin.*, his approach to this topic attains a greater complexity while striving to study the relationship between the elements love and knowledge. This fusion not only has doctrinal significance, his descriptions of such confront the reader with her/his own mind and its operations on a higher, more abstract level. It is his analysis of the elements of the human mind in *Trin.* IX-X which are most appropriately deemed as spiritual exercises. In the context of self-knowledge and self-love in *Trin.* X,⁷⁶ Augustine proceeds to apply his views on human love, including longings, and to some extent 'will', to the context of human knowledge (which will be discussed more extensively in subsection 3.iii.f-h). He instructs that directing one's love and desires to physical or material things will distract or deter one from obtaining true self-knowledge. Attaching love to these things or images of them will create a false self-image (X.6.8, 8.11). It will also potentially lead to sin, as in when the will is absorbed with material things, it becomes like them and in doing so, turns its back on the better things (XI.5.8, XII.10.14-15).

Another important aspect introduced in book VIII is the notion *verbum*, inner truth or an unspoken thought (see section 3.iii.c). This can best be described analogously in its relation to the Holy Trinitarian procession, as in the Son of God, *Verbum Dei*, having been brought forth from God the Father. Applied to the human mind, the *mens* brings forth knowledge *notitia* and now more specifically, inner truth *verba*. Augustine explains the notion *verbum* in both contexts of knowledge and love. In the context of knowledge, a *verbum* comes forth in the case of self-knowledge and also when the mind contemplates the eternal principles in the *Verbum Dei*. Accordingly, the element love or will in the human mind forms a parallel to the Holy Spirit, which binds together the first two Persons. In the human mind, *amor* binds together the first two elements, the mind to its knowledge.

72 X.5.7, 11.17-18 and 12.19.

73 See section 3.iii.b. for extensive references on commentaries of Augustine's notion of self-knowledge in *Trin.* and in other works.

74 The conscious act of 'willing' is involved here as well.

75 In *Gen. litt.* he identifies self-knowledge with the term *anima* or 'soul'; but in *Trin.* with the term *mens* (Hill, *Trinity*, 337, note 21).

76 e.g.: X.3.5, 10.15 and 11.16.

The element love also has to do with the inner appreciation, intuition, approbation or confirmation that a particular knowledge is true conforming to what one knows in one's own mind to be true (VIII.6.9).

In books XII-XIII, Augustine expands his exploration of the element knowledge further, returning to his inquiry as to which knowledge pertains specifically to the image of God. In brief, he concludes that *memoria* shares with *mens* lower and higher levels of functioning. Because the lower operations of mind and memory involve intramental physical images, Augustine will then be required to demarcate the rational soul into lower and higher regions (*ratio superior* and *inferior*), which he expounds throughout book XII. Accordingly he differentiates two different types of self-knowledge, two different kinds of selves as well as two general kinds of knowledge: *scientia* and *sapientia*. Only the higher region of the *mens* merits the distinction of the location where God is imaged, the intellect which is nourished only by *sapientia*, not *scientia*.

3.ii.d. *Imago Trinitatis: A Unity of Mind-Self-Knowledge and Self-Love (books IX-X)*

This section continues dealing specifically with the two main triads mentioned above which Augustine deemed as the trinities best representing the image of God: *mens-notitia-amor* and *memoria-intelligentia-amor/voluntas*.⁷⁷ We will examine more closely Augustine's remarks on the three elements in the rational soul, *mens*, *notitia* and *amor*, which he describes as being immaterial, independent substances⁷⁸ (IX.4.5). The justification for the latter is that they require or possess no qualities in order to exist in themselves.^{79 80} 'For this knowledge is a kind of life in the reason of the knower...' (XI.4.4). 'And what is love but a kind of life...' (VIII.10.14). Functioning interdependently, the three elements form a unity in the human mind; they are what endow the mind its unity -as well as its sense of self.

Augustine points out that love and knowledge are different substances from mind in that they both have a relational character. They can only exist as long as there is an object external to itself: as long as there is something loved or something known.⁸¹ The mind itself however does not possess this trait. It, too, is a substance, existing in itself without a relational necessity in order to sustain its existence. Yet in this context of Augustine's discussion of self-awareness in the triads, the mind is not

77 General literature on Augustine's doctrine of self-knowledge in his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis*: Ayres, *Augustine, Trinity*, *ibid*: "Discipline, Self-Knowledge; Williams, "*Sapientia*"; A.-I. Bouton-Touboul, "Qu'il n'y a pas de amour sans connaissance: étude d'un argument de *De Trinitate*, livres VIII-XV" in: (Bermon, *Trinitate*, 2012), 181-203. B. Stock, *Augustine: The Reader, Meditation, Self-Knowledge and the Ethics of Interpretation*, (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1996). For the full inventory of secondary sources, see notes 106 and 108 in section iii.

78 See also note 39. This recalls Plotinus *Enn.* VI.7.41.9, who makes the same claim about substances regarding the triad of knowing (*nous*, *noësis*, *noëton*: *Enn.* V.3.5.44). Love is a substance as well as the higher soul (*Enn.* III.5.3). / Normally the term *substantia* used by Augustine is attributed to his consultation of Aristotle or more likely Porphyry's exegesis of Aristotle's doctrine of categories. Ayres finds this unlikely and attributes Augustine's source to Plotinus. In my view, Plotinus is likely Augustine's source for the term *substantia*, due to the fact that many other elements of Plotinus' *Nous* occur in Augustine's exposition on self-knowledge and knowledge in *Trin.* (Ayres, *Trinity*, 295).

79 See Gilson's comments on the triad *mens-notitia-amor* in *Trin.* IX.4.5 as substances. He objects to Schmaus' designation of the triads in the human mind as being an 'actual consciousness' (Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 130, note 32) and deems this trinity instead as a 'virtual image of the Trinity' (Gilson, *Introduction*, 1929, 286).

80 Whether mind, knowledge and love are all deemed as substances by Augustine, seems for some to be an unsettled matter. Brachtendorf comments here against Hölscher, who maintains that Augustine applied a different definition of substance to the human mind, namely that the terms such as *amor* and *notitia* serve as qualities of the mind (or accidentals): (*Struktur*, 126-133 esp. 130-note 33). I do not find Holscher's view convincing.

81 Comparable to relational terms like 'friend' or 'father'. (See Hill's summary of books V-VI-VII, pp.186-188 : the Holy Trinity and these relational substances God the Father and God the Son.) Brachtendorf: There are no accidentals involved here. This is an *ad se* predication (Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 63-67).

brought forth by another element (XIV.10.13). The mind does however bring forth knowledge and love.⁸² Additionally, the mind is always immediately present to itself (X.12.19);⁸³ it is always conscious of itself and of the fact that it exists. It is therefore by nature reflexive (X.5.7, 10.16).⁸⁴ As mentioned in point (c.), *mens* refers to the self-consciousness which Augustine finds more appropriately expressed in the term *memoria*, in “recalling itself”.⁸⁵ The three elements remain substances of equal value, and as such, form one essence. This conception is parallel to the relationship of perfect unity of the three divine Persons which subsumes the differences of the separate missions of the second and third Persons) (X.11.18, XV.17.28).⁸⁶ Therefore in order for the three elements in the human trinity to be equal to each other (and in order for this triad to make sense), all three elements must have an object, in the first place, itself, as explained in the next point (f.). Thus the unity of this triad depends upon the activity of the mind in producing knowledge of itself and loving itself.

When the mind becomes one with itself, it loves itself. In this case, love is also equal to the mind. Self-knowledge (the product of mind) is dependent upon mind as well as love (or its self-love) for its existence.⁸⁷ The ‘product of the mind’ also constitutes a kind of truth: an inner *verbum*. The reproductive activities of the mind demonstrate the Trinitarian parent (*parens*)-offspring (*proles*) relationship which Augustine described as the Father giving birth to the Son. As such, knowledge is both word and image of the mind (IX.11.16), analogous to the Son being an exact expression-*Verbum* and Image of the Father.

Brachtendorf offers a number of insightful comments on these passages in book IX. The mind has direct access to itself but not through the senses. The mind knows itself directly through itself. *Ergo et se ipsam per se ipsam novit* (IX.3.3). This means that Augustine is refuting the notion that the self

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- 82 (IX.3.18). N. J. Torchia points out some significant differences between Augustine’s self-knowledge and self-love here: self-knowledge produces an offspring (*verbum*); self-love does not bring forth anything. When the mind knows itself, the mind is the author of it knowing, as knower and knowing. But while self-knowledge can be begotten by oneself, self-love does not allow for such self-generation, even when the mind loves itself. Torchia proceeds to explain how Augustine affirms the relationship between knowing as a revelatory act and knowing as begetting or generation [*Restless Mind Curiositas & the Scope of inquiry in St. Augustine’s psychology*, Marquette Studies in Philosophy, 83 (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2013), 178-179].
- 83 Recalls Plotinus’ proposition that self-knowledge is one with oneself (unity) and one with the divine Intellect: *Enn.* V.8.11.33-35.
- 84 On the difference between ‘knowing oneself’ and ‘thinking oneself, van Bavel comments that according to Augustine the experience of knowing oneself differs from a purposeful knowing of another object. Self-consciousness is to be understood as singular. It does not consist of connecting a thinking subject with the object it is thinking about. The sought after object is immediately present to itself and one perceives it as a presence to itself. Thus Augustine makes a minimal distinction between thinking of oneself and knowing oneself. The first is a result of immediacy and self-presence of the mind. The latter, knowing, always includes active reflection and the aspect of an acquired possession (*Drie-eenheid*, Inleiding, 26-27).
- 85 Van Bavel clarifies: ‘*The ultimate trinity which Augustine describes is memory, insight and will. Remembering is more than remembering the past, it is the ability to possess the known, even though this occurs in an unconscious manner. Remembering is the source of our personality. Insight is the intuitive contemplation of our thoughts. Will is the connecting and unifying love. Three forces, one mind, different but existing in a necessary relationship to one another.*’ (Dutch: *Drie-eenheid*, 25) (translation from Dutch by LZ)
- 86 Ayres, *Passionate Intellect*, 271: ‘*Our self-knowledge can only begin to serve as an analogy for the Trinity once we discover where we might “look” in ourselves to grow in knowledge and love of God.*’ See also *Trin.* IX.12.18.
- 87 Augustine deals with the Delphic command of ‘Know thyself!’ (Plotinus mentions this adage *i.e.* in *Enn.* VI.7.41.23). / Why then is self-knowledge necessary? Augustine inquires in X.5.7 ‘*I believe it means that it (LZ: mind) should think about itself and live according to its nature...*’ Torchia explains what living according to its nature could mean for Augustine. It establishes the standard for maintaining the soul’s rank between what is above it and what is below it in the hierarchy of reality, extending to the mutable and corruptible natures. Torchia points to the similarities of Plotinus’ depiction of the fall of the soul in *Enn.* V.1.10 (Torchia, *Curiositas*, 181). In my view Augustine means here that we should strive to love according to our better nature, our truer self, which entails the actualization of the intellect, the *imago Dei/Trinitatis*.

is known or derived from knowledge of other minds (which would in fact be mediated by the physical senses). Furthermore, the main point of Augustine's thesis is that knowing, *notitia*, in itself, possesses a certain character of Being, which is intelligible. Because of this, knowledge, according to the order of being, is comparable to its object. Augustine is demonstrating here that knowledge of something is actually higher in worth than the object is itself. Knowledge of the body (which is an Idea-related reality) is higher than the (reality of) the body self. Augustine does not apply this to God however: because knowledge of God is not more valuable than God.⁸⁸

To tie in all the main points here, the elements mind, knowledge and love are substantive and can exist independently without qualifiers. Knowledge manifests as subject-knower and object-when something can be known and be loved in someone's mind. Augustine sets out to prove that the mind always knows itself, has always known itself and will always know itself. Self-knowledge exists necessarily as long as the mind exists.⁸⁹ This self-relationship is also a characteristic of the divine Trinity.⁹⁰ The condition for knowing oneself, Augustine argues, is necessarily loving oneself. As such, self-awareness and the activities of thinking, knowing, understanding, loving and desiring all function in the human mind in a certain unity, corresponding in a vague manner to the Holy Trinity. To what extent one's self-image, self-knowledge and self-love can be true is another matter, which will be dealt in the sections iii. and iv.

3.ii.e. The Object of the Trinities: Self and God

After examining many trinities of diverse compositions beginning with book VII, at the end of book X, Augustine finally arrives at the trinity which most adequately meets his criteria of being an image of God: the triad of memory-knowledge/intelligence-love/will.⁹¹ In the meantime, he establishes a crucial new condition: the object or focus of these trinities.⁹² The trinities are only dynamic and succeed in being an image of the Holy Trinity when focused on the self. The self as subject having an object of contemplation, itself, reflects the Holy Trinity which eternally remembers and contemplates itself (XV.17.28). Such a trinity may be theoretically called an *imago Trinitatis*, for in turning inward and gazing at oneself, the mind reflects the divine Trinity doing the same.

However Augustine warns that a trinity with itself as object is still a faulty one. If it remains in this state, it will never become perfected because it still encompasses the potential to fall into sin and do evil, such as, longing for status, power, superiority and dominion over others.⁹³ Augustine asserts that self-love which is truly dynamic is only possible while loving God. Proper love entails loving one's neighbor equally as oneself. Being a good person and doing good things essentially means choosing to act for the common good of all, contrary to pursuing what is only beneficial for oneself. The latter, as well as the evils mentioned above, are consequences of pride and original sin and for this reason

88 Cf: Plotinus *Enn.* V.3.1; (*Struktur*, 126-129, 143; 128). My comment here is that Augustine's conception of self-love, being one with itself and the mind always being present to itself, has the character of *intellectualis = intelligibilis* in *Gen. litt* XII.10.21.

89 How Augustine's *cogito* argument (*Trin.* X.10.14 and 16) influenced Descartes. See i.e.: B. Stock, *Inner Dialogues, The Philosophical Soliloquy in Late Antiquity*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2010), 111-120.

90 XV.6.10; XV.7.12: 'So the Father knows all things in himself, knows them in the Son; but in himself as knowing himself, in the Son as knowing his Word which is about all these things that are in himself. Likewise the Son too knows all things in himself, and he knows them in the Father as the things from which are born all things that he as Son knows in himself...' (McKenna)

91 X.10.16, 11.17-18, 12.19.

92 e.g.: XI. 5.8, 6.10; XII.4.4, XIV.2.4. For an extensive explanation of the objects of the trinities, see Sullivan, *Image of God*, 134-148.

93 XII.8.13, 9.14, 10.15 and 11.16. These are evil acts instigated by the devil which can be defeated by God's Justice (XIII.13.17). For God is Justice (VIII.7.10) and Love itself (VIII.8.12).

we require Christ's grace to raise us up to the proper functioning of the human will, to be able to love beyond ourselves and love God. Hence a trinity with self as object is a primary condition for becoming a perfect image of God, yet alone, it is deficient.

The correct focus however, -with the help of God, the gift of love and grace from the Holy Spirit-, is when the human mental trinity of memory-knowledge-love/will is directed to God as object. The elements of the triad focused on *sui* will transform to *Dei*.⁹⁴ It will form a more perfect unity with itself-unified with God, reflecting in some way -albeit imperfectly, the unification of *memoria-intellegentia-amor/voluntas* in the Holy Trinity which results in an absolutely perfect equality (for example in XV.17.28-29). At this point, a person can truly know, understand and love his or herself. One finds fulfillment and joy in thinking of God: recalling previous thoughts or experiences of God -or recalling or reflecting upon one's knowledge, understanding and loving of God. In this way, this trinity produces truth (*verba*) which approach the ultimate Word (*Verbum Dei*) of Wisdom and Truth (XV.15.24-26).

3.ii.f. *Excursus on Love and Knowledge in Modern and Ancient Terminology*

A question which readily comes to mind in the discussion of love and knowledge in both Augustine and Plotinus is how can something like love be applied to something as technical as acquiring knowledge and the cognitive functions of the mind? This will be the subject of the following paragraph, discussed more or less in the form of an essay, which includes other similar considerations which come up frequently in this course of this study: the use of modern terms to denote (especially philosophical) terms in antiquity. Many researchers seem to assume that terms such as 'intellect' or 'rational' in ancient texts have approximately the same meaning as our usage of them today. Other terms such as 'consciousness'⁹⁵ and 'self'⁹⁶ have a distinctly modern ring. To make the list of ambiguous terms complete we could include the following as well: spiritual, science, wisdom, intuition, memory and even knowledge and love. This necessitates a brief clarification of ancient and

94 e.g.: XIV.2.4., 6,8-9, XIV.12.15, 13.17,14.18, 15.21, 19.25, etc.

95 It is not uncommon to encounter terms such as 'consciousness' in translations of ancient texts or in secondary literature in order to aid the comprehension of ancient philosophical notions (without further explication of their broad meaning). For instance, this term was used freely throughout Chapter III on Plotinus. It is also used frequently in Armstrong's translation of the *Enneads*. Plotinus discusses consciousness/awareness (*aisthanesthai/parakolouthen*) in e.g.: *Enn.* I.4.9-10 (the Greek terms are taken from I.4.9.15). Another example is E. Hill's translation of *Trin.*, the term consciousness is used for *in animus* and *in animo* (in the soul) IX.10.16 (Hill, *Trinitate*, 282-283) (while McKenna translates this as 'the human mind': *Trinity*, 37-38).

96 In my view, Augustine's conception of 'self' corresponds to 'consciousness' (see notes 95 and 97), 'states of mind', 'ways of knowing' or knowing oneself. There is limitless literature on the subject of Augustine's conception of self in light of the modern view of self. R. Sorabji's *Self: Ancient and Modern Insights about Individuality, Life, and Death*, 2008 provides a good overview of this problematic especially in the context of Augustine's notion of self-knowledge and awareness in *Trin.* X.10.14 and 16 (Sorabji, 201-245). (Sorabji does not however treat this in in the sense of intellection, which pertains to my interpretation here.) (This note, as well as 97, is an excerpt from my article: "Prayer, Desire and the Image of God: Augustine's Longing for God in his 'Prayer to the Holy Trinity'", CPO Conference in Utrecht, August 2014, forthcoming.)

modern terminology, which will be geared to avoiding general but also coarse misunderstandings.⁹⁷ This explanation will support the final hypothesis of this study that Augustine's depiction of the *imago Dei/Trinitatis* (as well as Plotinus' image/intellect) can be best understood as 'a kind of consciousness'.⁹⁸ Yet I would go further to add that this consciousness is sharply distinguished from the ordinary daily state of mind.

The issue at hand has little to do with Augustine's individual definitions which might have been highly original or created a legacy. It has more to do with our contemporary way of thinking, in which something like love is identified solely to the heart, as emotions having an existence apart from the more controllable ambitions of the 'head'. More specifically, love, from the perspective of modern psychology, is categorized as an emotion belonging to the irrational or intuitive 'right side brain functioning,' as distinguished from the cognitive and rational left side brain function, which deals with

97 For an overview of contemporary philosophical discussions concerning the application of the modern conception of 'consciousness' to ancient concepts, see 'Introduction' in: S. Heinämaa, V. Lähteenmäki, P. Remes, (eds.) *Consciousness: From Perception to Reflection in the History of Philosophy*, (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), 1-10. The term consciousness used in this study corresponds to the general, conventional definition as indicated in *The Oxford Illustrated Dictionary*, 1981: Conscious – 'aware, knowing; with mental faculties awake or active; self-conscious (of actions etc.) realized by the actor.' Consciousness – 'State of being conscious: totality of a person's thought and feelings or a class of these; perception (of, that).' This description of 'conscious' is highly appropriate for the application to the doctrines of Augustine because it signifies awareness and a process of knowing through (various kinds of) perception. Additionally, because it indicates a purely mental faculty. Related specifically to Augustinian conceptions which are also mentioned in this chapter, the term consciousness can be used in the context of reflexive cognitive (another modern term) activity or in being present to oneself (i.e.: *se cogitare* and *se nosse* in *Trin.* X.10.14 and X.10.16). These terms can in turn be translated as self-awareness or self-knowledge. 'Consciousness' or 'awareness' in Augustine also have to do with the non-physical faculties of the soul in gathering knowledge and is thus related to Augustine's epistemology: i.e.: his investigations of the nature and limitations of human knowledge in *Trin.* IX-XIII. These in turn are directly related to Augustine's doctrine of the soul and his exegesis of the image of God. The latter is designated as the highest part of the soul-which he also designates as the *intellectus*. Hence Augustine's notion of intellect and the image of God pertain to the higher part of the soul. I refer to the intellect as a 'kind of consciousness' or 'state of mind', or even 'higher consciousness' as contrasted with ordinary, awake state of mind and perception. 'Intellect' is a state of mind which requires progressive actualization. The proper philosophical term for this higher state of mind is 'intellection', pertaining to the activity of the intellect or to intellectual vision, the definition of which is given in this study. The term intellection indeed requires more explanation in order to not confuse this with general modern conceptions of 'intellect' which often connotes empirical perception or discursive thought. (This note is also an excerpt from my article on Prayer, forthcoming.) Kany identifies various interpretation models in the scholarly literature of *Trin.* from the middle of the 19th century to today, (e.g.: C. Taylor, *Sources of Self*), many of which (such as the idealistic, Platonizing and noetic models) have characterized *Trin.* IX-X as a *Philosophie des Selbstbewusstseins*. R. Kany, "Typen und Tendenzen der *De Trinitate*-Forschung seit F. Chr. Bauer" in: Brachtendorf, *Gott, Bild*, 13-28.

98 On April 15, 2015, Prof. Rowan Williams gave a lecture at St. Andrews University, UK on 'What is Consciousness?', debunking the contemporary reductionist position that 'consciousness is a kind of a machine'. His lecture confirmed my view that my research necessitates a specification of general modern connotations concerning knowledge and love, which will mislead if applied to ancient terminology. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=share&v=81YfnPVgBEI&app=desktop>

processing empirical knowledge.⁹⁹ This conception of love and emotion, as being radically categorized as irrational, is not applicable to Plotinus' or Augustine's way of thinking.¹⁰⁰

A parallel question could be raised in Chapter IV.4.iii. concerning Augustine's notion of intellectual vision in *Gen. litt.* XII: why does Augustine apply the term 'intellectual' to a vision which involves seeing God? Augustine's conception of intellectual vision also entails experiencing ecstasy. Ecstasy and religious experience would also seem to us today as belonging solely to the realm of emotions. Along with religious sentiment and love, these are generally cast into the realm of the irrational. It must first be established that ancient thinkers held different notions about the human being than we do today. Our contemporary notions seem to be particularly colored by thinkers from the era of Enlightenment.¹⁰¹

To illustrate this further, Augustine distinguished humans from animals in *Trin.* with the simple observation that humans walk upright and that the human head is the part of the body in closest proximity to the sky. This would be analogous to the *imago Dei*, the highest part of the soul- being closest to God. Further he mentioned that humans are anatomically equipped to gaze up at the stars, unlike four-legged animals (*Trin.* XII.1.1). This conception could correspond to some extent with contemporary ideas concerning the human head as containing the brain, the center of our intellectual functioning and nervous system. But the human mind according to Augustine is not limited to rational brain or intellectual functions, it functions as a whole, is inseparable from the spirit, the soul and the heart.¹⁰² The ancient conception of the human spirit or mind encompasses both emotions and love which are not entirely set apart from the *ratio*-the conscious, thinking mind. Nor do the terms 'intellect' or 'rational'¹⁰³ for Augustine and Plotinus bear the same connotations as they do today: of being separate faculties of the mind which solely deal with processing empirical information and factual reality. The discrepancy between the modern and ancient usage of these terms leave many doors open to misinterpret Augustine and Plotinus and in particular when discussing the topic of 'Christian Platonism'.

In spite of the general differences in mentality which have evolved in the last 1600 years, Augustine's and Plotinus' manner of depicting love in the human psyche is in some ways not so

99 e.g.: R.D. Gross, *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour*, (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 2nd ed. 1992), 98. (This is a handbook for first year university students of psychology.)

L. Schumacher claims essentially the same for modern philosophy: '*On the modern scene...religious knowledge and ordinary knowledge are not usually conceived in such a closely related fashion. In point of fact, revelation is for modern philosophers something quite irrelevant to reason; it is therefore something quite different than it was for Augustine.*' "The Theo-logic of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge by Divine Illumination", *Augustinian Studies*, 41:2 (2010), 375-399, 381.

100 Rist has located ancient texts in which this demarcation line between spiritual and carnal is present: '*...Plato's original understanding of eros and the nature of erotic desire, whether carnal or sublimated, wholly or in part, had been toned down by Plotinus, Augustine's principal source, had long provoked a Christian...unease which invited suppression and 'bowdlerization', which invited that the perceptive thrust of the theory -and of its possible development- could easily be blunted, rejected or simply ignored.*' (*Augustine Deformed*, 63.) Rist explains in note 2 that '*"bowdlerization" often took the form (as in 1st c. Jewish thinker Philo) of attempting to separate carnal from spiritual desires and objectives as radically opposed thus destroying, (rather than leaving behind as wholly insufficient) the first steps of the Platonic ladder-Diotima's outlook of Socrates in The Symposium. ...Christian interpreters after Origen found it safer...to distinguish carnal love as normally of Satan, while continuing to use its vividly carnal language for "mystical" purposes.*'

101 Such as i.a. Deists, Cf.: W.Bristow, "Enlightenment", in: E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2011 Edition), <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/enlightenment/#RelEnl>

102 For Plotinus and Augustine, the mind and the activity of thinking are basically regarded as non-physical, although they can possess materiality in varying degrees, cf. *Civ. Dei* VIII.5-7, in which Augustine endorses this aspect of Platonism..

103 Stróżyński stresses that Plotinus' term 'rational' does not mean thinking discursively but as having a structure that is in accord with reason. God is transrational but this does not mean that God is not rational." [M. Stróżyński, *Mystical Experience and Philosophical Discourse in Plotinus*, (Póznán: Publishing House of the Póznán Society for the Advancement of the Arts and Sciences, 2008) 202, note 67]. The same applies to Augustine's conception of the Holy Trinity.

estranged from the modern frame of mind. Emotions and love are still recognized today as having positive and negative consequences. Emotions are associated with the world of intimate feelings or sensations which touch or resonate in the depths of the soul, or which motivate taking action or justify certain decisions. Influenced by the strict separation of head and heart, we nonetheless believe today that emotions, desires and love are generally healthy expressions of the heart and that they as well can stimulate the imagination or be connected in some way to artistic inspiration or intuition. Love and desire is what binds us to others, in friendships, family relations, romantic partnerships and marriages.

Today we still consider emotions negative when they lead to mental confusion, disorder, havoc, vice or lack of self-control or outright egoism. Common to antiquity and today's general view, love and desire can be considered potentially harmful when associated with sensual or frivolous appetites and cravings (like for chocolate or race cars), which are not necessary for survival and do not contribute to long-term, personal happiness; or when the object of one's love has no ultimate significance in itself. Only the experience-the thrill of it, although momentary, is the object. Today we would consider 'loves' of this kind as common to everyone and a part of just 'being human.' We would perhaps also deem them 'irrational' or even senseless and in that respect they are of lesser value.

On the other hand, Augustine and Plotinus would judge these forms of love -as in frivolous and pointless cravings- as being related to the body especially if the thrill is so overwhelming or enticing that it overrides our common sense and concern for health risks. The motivation behind the pursuit of physically oriented 'loves', including sexual longings, for the pleasure in themselves is in their perspective related to an incorrect attitude or a false sense of reality. (*N.b.*: Both denounced Epicurism.) Yet even both recognized that when a notion of true reality is embraced, the physical thrills can sometimes still be difficult to control or overcome.¹⁰⁴ Both thinkers relate love for external, material objects or physical gratifications as potential vices or evil, which can grow out of proportion and enslave us in addiction. The real tragedy of physical and material loves or longings is that they distract and deter us from our contemplation of God.¹⁰⁵ Augustine and Plotinus recommend distancing oneself from things which hold intact the domination of body over the mind. Both envisioned a direct bridge from human love to a divine source and the other way around, a Godhead which is the ultimate cause as well as source of all love, thought, illumination, knowledge and rationality. Yet the longings of the body stand in the way of the reception of divinity and lead the human will to detours or wrong directions.

Love for God in secular contemporary thought is generally regarded as a healthy or benign outflow of religious practice. But it can also be cast by others into the same dimension of irrationality as religious sentiment and emotions with malevolent potentials. Religious sentiment can house all kinds of risks and dangers (terrorism, racism, bigotry, etc.) if evolved to fanaticism. Religious experience and religion in general, is often considered today to belong to the intimate sphere of an individual. Although both Augustine and Plotinus regarded encountering God and truth only within the depths of the individual incorporeal soul (and to a limited degree in the body or the world external to the individual soul), they both attributed universality to the religious experience of higher knowledge and love. Incorrect knowledge of God-especially of God having a material nature, they posited, is

104 *e.g.*: Augustine also tells for example how his friend Alypius (a deeply pious man) in his youth enjoyed going to the circus to see gladiators fight because of the sheer sensation of seeing violence and bloodshed (*Conf.* VI.8.13; X.31.44-end X).

105 Both Augustine and Plotinus have been criticized for having 'otherworldly' ambitions and neglecting the presence of God in the material world. Otherworldliness is distinctly expressed in the *Enneads* in I.8.6.10-13: '*We must take a flight from hence...*' (Plotinus cited Homer's *Iliad*.)

potentially harmful because it will mislead and cause illusions about ourselves and the world. For both thinkers, the more knowledge one acquires, the more universal it becomes. In the depth of one's heart, it is God's universal truth which an individual truly longs for and loves. True knowledge is less universal when it applies only to the experience of a limited number of individuals. The same is applied to love: true love does not entail loving someone for their body, because the body will degrade and perish; true love does not degrade; it is eternal, purely spiritual which one relishes and delights in while the mind is focused on God. True love nourishes a universal perspective as opposed to a self-oriented one. The subject of the discrepancies between modern and ancient terminology could fill an entire book, therefore we will now depart from this subject and continue further with a short introduction in point iii. on Augustine's epistemology.

3.iii. The Element Knowledge: Epistemology

3.iii.a. Introduction

Up until this point, a general overview of Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* has been given which showed Augustine's exploration of the mind and the triads which best reflected the Holy Trinity. The best triads, he concluded, involved the elements mind, knowledge and love in various elaborations. The elements love and knowledge in these triads of the image of God were intricately intertwined. Now we need to make an artificial incision and attempt to treat the elements knowledge and love as two separate tongs of the same fork. This incision will facilitate the comparison in Chapter VI of Augustine's doctrines of knowledge and love with Plotinus' epistemology and his notion of *Eros*. We will now zoom in on the element knowledge.

In the introduction of this chapter it was explained that Augustine's order of treatment of subject matter in *Trin.* was not very straightforward nor was the logic of his treatment immediately perceptible. However, there are some advantages in following Augustine's order of presentation: it will highlight the richness and the multiple layers of his doctrine. This complexity is fascinating, yet it also presents a challenge for whomever is striving for a concise and clear summary, without redundancy. The overlapping of material is inevitable due to the fact that the elements knowledge and love as well as the conception of *verbum* form together a kind of constellation and especially in books VIII-X.

This section will commence with a detailed treatment of the topics of self-knowledge and true knowledge (*verbum*) from books VIII-X (points b. and c.). Directly related to self-knowledge and the notion of truth is Augustine's notion of 'self' (d.) which will be briefly touched upon and lead us to one of the underlying themes in *Trin.*, Augustine's distinction between the inner and outer man in book XI. There he states that the inner man corresponds to the image of God. Yet the outer man is also of utmost importance to fully delineate here in order to obtain a clear differentiation of the region of the mind designated as the *imago Trinitatis*. He then sets out to fully explain sense perception and material images in the framework of his analysis of triads, demonstrating why these triads could not pertain to the image of God. This will be the subject of point (e.). Following this, he explains his theory of the two kinds of knowledge in books XII and XIII, corresponding to the two regions of the mind (point f.). The aspect of faith also plays a significant role in Augustine's view on acquiring knowledge and is also related to the motive of 'searching and finding' (g.). There is much said on faith in books XII-XIII, yet this is an underlying theme which he also treats in various contexts in *Trin.* Point (h.) will bring the main points together of both sections ii and iii: on the doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* and Augustine's epistemology.

The subject matter here is not only lengthy but also enormously complex. I have attempted to simplify and conglomerate it into a kind of epistemological system, which Augustine himself,

of course, did not really do. I owe my understanding of this difficult subject matter in *Trin.* to the studies of experts as Brachtendorf, Ayres and Williams.¹⁰⁶ Yet in bringing all these different aspects of Augustine's epistemology together in this section, a unique picture of Augustine's doctrine results which is not recognized in the studies of the scholars just mentioned. My research brings to light new connections and a sharpened articulation of what Augustine's epistemology precisely entails. Hence, although I recognize my indebtedness to these authors, these subsections reflect my own analysis and interpretation.

Before commencing, it would be helpful to explicate the term 'epistemology in the context of Augustine's doctrine. The term is intended here in a general sense, as in *the study of knowledge and justified belief* - the definition provided by the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. The more extensive definition, provided in the note below, applies to Augustine's thinking in *Trin.* as well, as to questioning how knowledge can be true, how one can obtain it, how to establish that knowledge is true, indicating the source of true knowledge and determining its limitations.¹⁰⁷

3.iii.b. Self-knowledge (*Trin.* VIII-X) ¹⁰⁸

Starting with *Trin.* VII, Augustine proposed to pursue at least four inquiries: 1. how can we become an image of God according to the knowledge of God, unless we know something or understand something about God? 2. how does this knowledge relate to our destiny to know and understand him better? and 3. how can we know or understand anything if we do not already have prior knowledge of it which will make us love to know more? The fourth is: how can we love something which one does not know? (VIII.4.6). The point here is that Augustine appears skeptical here about obtaining

106 See notes 15-17 as well as notes 77 and 106 for full bibliographies. In addition to these, others authors were consulted for Augustine's doctrine of self-knowledge in *Trin.*: G. Verbeke, "Connaissance de soi et Connaissance de Dieu", *Augustiniana*, IV, 1954, 495-515; C. Tornau, "The Background of Augustine's Triadic Epistemology in *De Trinitate* 11-15, A Suggestion" in: Bermon, O'Daly, *Le De Trinitate*, 251-266; J. Pépin, «Le tout et les parties dans la connaissance de la mens par elle même (*De Trin.* X,3,5-4,6)» in: Brachtendorf, *Gott, Bild*, 105-126; Lagouanère, *Intériorité et réflexivité* (2012); C. Horn, "Augustine's Theory of Mind and Self-Knowledge: Some Fundamental Problems" in: Bermon, O'Daly, *Le De Trinitate*, 205-219; R. Nash, *The Light of the Mind: St. Augustine's Theory of Knowledge*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky 1969), 72-75.

107 'Defined narrowly, epistemology is the study of knowledge and justified belief. As the study of knowledge, epistemology is concerned with the following questions: What are the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge? What are its sources? What is its structure, and what are its limits? As the study of justified belief, epistemology aims to answer questions such as: How we are to understand the concept of justification? What makes justified beliefs justified? Is justification internal or external to one's own mind? Understood more broadly, epistemology is about issues having to do with the creation and dissemination of knowledge in particular areas of inquiry.' M. Steup, "Epistemology" *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (Spring 2014 Edition) E. N. Zalta (ed.) RL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/epistemology/>.

108 Other works of Augustine dealing with self-knowledge, i.e.: *Soliloquia*; *De quantitate animae*, *De ordine*. See Brachtendorf (*Struktur*, 37-39) for a complete list. Brachtendorf points out that Augustine does not posit the study of the liberal arts as a prerequisite for self-knowledge in *Trin.* as he does in *De ordine*. As in *De ordine*, Augustine does establish a condition for true self-knowledge in *Trin.*, which is knowledge of God. Yet in *De ordine*, Augustine states that the mind acquires through its education knowledge of certain units of such by means of analysis and synthesis, characteristics of scientific systems which correspond to the structures of the intelligible world. The mind of the philosophically trained person refers to the corresponding relationships in the intelligible world. It recognizes itself in the midst of science and attains the intelligible world by that which the self has already achieved on a higher level, that which enabled the mind to accomplish this specific achievement (*Struktur*, 39).

knowledge of God¹⁰⁹ and even about the acquisition of true self-knowledge.¹¹⁰ Augustine's interest in 'knowing oneself' does not solely concern the personal psychology of an individual. The human mind is as a vast landscape with multifarious images stored in the memory; images deriving from one's worldly experiences which one has cherished and attached oneself to (XV.12.21). These images form a person's self-image. The human mind is therefore by its vast multiplicity impossible for itself to truly fathom. Augustine asks God how we can fathom him if we cannot even fathom ourselves: '*...can any man comprehend this wisdom, which is simultaneously prudence, simultaneously knowledge, seeing that we cannot even comprehend our own?*' (XV.7.13).¹¹¹ In his prayer at the end of *Trin.* XV.28.51, Augustine refers to inner psychological chaos when he pleads: '*Deliver me, o God, from the multitude of words with which I am inwardly afflicted in my soul;*' (McKenna).

Augustine believed that self-knowledge was of course possible, as shown earlier. If we did not have this we would not exist. His conclusion that humans do not possess the capability to obtain complete self-knowledge forms in fact a parallel with his conclusion on the knowledge of God. God is to some extent intelligible; in book VIII Augustine showed how God is knowable in terms such as invisible Light. We can know God by contemplating the Ideas as standards of judgment (as treated in section 2.ii: 'Trinitarian Godhead' 'God is Love...'). Yet God as Trinity is predominantly beyond our present attainability (see section 2.vii. 'Synthesis'; and *Trin.* XV.14.24, etc). The limitations he imposes on knowledge of self and God do not imply futility or a call to give up the pursuit. The gaps of our knowledge are filled in by constantly searching (which includes finding) as well as by faith. Furthermore he posits optimistically, that beginning with the awareness of our self and the knowledge that the human mind is immaterial, we are surely able to begin to understand God. The best way to understand oneself, his doctrine implies, is to focus on God.¹¹² One knows oneself truly, not when looking at oneself in this life in terms of the world around us or outside of us, but by

109 In IX.1.1, Augustine underscores Paul's statements (1 Cor. 8:2-3): '*If anybody thinks he knows anything, he does not yet know as he ought to know. But anyone who loves God, this man is known to Him.*' Also-'*...so great is the force of thought...the mind does not see itself.*' (XIV.5.6).

110 In his post-Manichaean development, Augustine studied Platonist skepticism for a brief period (See Chapter II.1.i.e).

111 '*Then how can this wisdom by which God knows all things, in such a way that what is called the future, is not being waited for to happen as though it were not there yet, but things past and future are all present with things present; and things are not thought about one for one, with thought moving from one to another, but all things grasped in one glance or view; how, I say, can any man comprehend this wisdom, which is simultaneously prudence* (LZ: see Hill, *Trinity*, 406 note 25: "God's wisdom") *simultaneously knowledge, seeing that we cannot even comprehend our own?... from myself indeed I understand how wonderful and incomprehensible is your knowledge with which you have made me, seeing that I am not even able to comprehend myself whom you have made; and yet a fire burns up in my meditation* (Ps. 29:3), *causing me to seek your face always* (Ps. 105:4).' (XV.7.13) (McKenna).

112 i.e. *Trin.* IX.6.11: one knows the truth in oneself by contemplating the divine principles, the Forms, which serve as standards of judgment; IX.8.13: in order to love oneself and others, God's love must be involved; X.7.10, X.12.19: the material images in the memory do not pertain to the true self. In contemplating the divine Forms, one sees who one truly is, the image of God; XIV.1.1 and 12.15: one sees what does not pertain to this true self, which are the images from the world applied to the self. In experiencing God one sees also the infirmity of one's will, sins, wounds and traumas caused by unhealthy loves-or loves which are not geared to the common good of all.

R. Williams summarizes this notion in Augustine's doctrine: '*We are not able to know or love ourselves accurately unless we know and love ourselves as known and loved by God. ...Self-understanding as a creature in the fullest sense involves an awareness of a loving creator...in the human mind is the reflection of God's love and so of God's sapiential Being. It* (LZ: self-understanding) *is to become aware of the all pervasiveness in the human mind and in human life of the divine caritas.*' ("*Sapientia*", 319-320, 326); W. Hankey's summary: ("*Mind*", *AttA*, 563-567): '*When it comes to the true knowledge of itself, mind comes to God. Truth is the Divine Mind of Word* (p. 564)...*So self-knowledge and the knowledge of God are inescapably intertwined and include knowledge of all else.*' (p. 566); Brachtendorf discusses how Augustine expresses this notion in *De ordine*, e.g.: 2.18 (Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 36-37).

searching inwardly while consciously engaged with God.¹¹³ Thus a relationship with oneself becomes deeper with the progressive intensity of a relationship with God. Accordingly, a correct self-image will be obtained simultaneously with the gradual assimilation of knowledge of God and among other things, of the divine Ideas, Christ's Incarnation, the mystery of the Holy Trinity or divine Wisdom. An assimilation which is, in turn, dependent upon God's grace.

The positive outcome of self-knowledge is further substantiated in books IX-X in which Augustine is inspired by Socrates' adage, quoting the maxim of the Delphic oracle: *Know yourself!*¹¹⁴ Here Augustine identifies two ways of knowing oneself: by *cogitatio sui* and *notitia sui*. The first kind of self-knowledge, *cogitare* involves discursive thinking and contemplating one's particular, individual characteristics (X.5.7, 7.9). *Se nosse* is a truer kind of self-knowledge, involving an immediate, intuitive self-awareness of one's existence (X.4.6).¹¹⁵ The activities of the verbs *nosse* and *cogitare* also entail the gradual act of self-knowing involved with self-love in recognizing truth. We could say that the differentiations *se nosse* and *se cogitare* correspond to some extent to Augustine's distinction of two kinds of knowledge: *scientia* and *sapientia* which will be discussed here in subsection vii. below. Noteworthy here is the differentiation of our normal mode of thinking and the consciousness of the *imago Dei* which also parallels Augustine's distinction between spiritual and intellectual vision (*Gen. litt* XII.6.15, *et al.*) This distinction is elaborated further in the two parts of the rational soul: *ratio superior* (intellect) and *ratio inferior*; and *scientia* as opposed to *sapientia*, which will also be delineated in the subsections below.¹¹⁶

Augustine's conclusions in *Trin.* VIII-XV correspond to his famous statements in *Soliloquiorum*. There he postulates that by nature every soul desires to know and specifies that one desires primarily two things: to know oneself (one's soul) and to know God.¹¹⁷ Hence, Augustine attributes to this higher intellectual consciousness, the *imago Dei/Trinitatis*, the longing to know oneself, to know, to see and understand God's Being in a more profound manner. A question we could raise here about Augustine's notion of self-knowledge is whether he intended true self-knowledge to be obtained by means of a *visio intellectualis*? Among the recent scholarly publications on Augustine's self-knowledge in *Trin.*, L. Ayres has been the only author who has recognized the connection between Augustine's third vision from *Gen. litt* and his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* in *Trin.*¹¹⁸ We saw in Chapter IV (4.ii.i and iv.b.) how Augustine borrowed directly the characteristics of Plotinus' intellect to girth his theory of intellectual vision in *Gen. litt* XII. These characteristics were, among others, the intuitive and immediate grasp of the Ideas and a purely non-material consciousness. In Augustine's conception of self-knowledge in *Trin.*, it is evident that he has integrated more aspects of Plotinus' epistemology, some of the same characteristics from his theory of intellectual vision, which are intended in *Trin.* to be already understood, such as the immediacy of comprehension in *se nosse*. Plotinus' formulation of the characteristics of the human intellect and divine Intellect was for Augustine a frequent source of inspiration. In particular as well, Plotinus' depiction of the *Nous* coming to existence: the *Nous* turned to the One in order to receive its particular properties which

113 Zwollo, "Prayer", forthcoming.

114 *Trin.* X.5.7; relayed by Socrates in many of Plato's works, e.g.: *Phaedrus* (229E); Plotinus: *Enn.* VI.7.35.20-28.

115 For a more detailed analysis of the difference between *se cogitare* and *se nosse*, see Agaësse, *BA* 16, 605-606. According to the author, *se nosse* represents implicit, "pre-conscious" knowledge. Augustine's two types of self-knowledge are an object of discussion within the framework of the indebtedness to Plotinus and are also discussed extensively in Chapter VI.3.ii.e.

116 In XV.14-15, Augustine treats again the topic of the human *verbum*, where he uses the terms *cogitare* and *scientia* for knowing or for knowledge in the sense that the *verbum* or true knowledge is a product or an image of the mind.

117 *Deum et animam scire cupio. Soliloquiorum* 1.6; *Trin.* VIII.3.4, 8.12 and 10.14, XII.14.22, *et al.*

118 Ayres, *Trinity*, 150-152.

consist of Thought, Self-conception and Self-referentiality. This included the Intellect being equivalent to the Intelligible. Like Plotinus, Augustine also described love and longing for knowledge (of the intellect) in the context of love for beauty (*Trin.* X.1.1, 1.2).¹¹⁹ The correspondence of Augustine's conception of *se nosse* to intellectual vision, which traces back to Plotinus' doctrine, will be explored in the next subsection on 'True Knowledge (*verbum*)' and in the synthesis (h.). These aspects will also be brought into the broader synthesis of Augustine's doctrine in the sections on love (3.iv.) and the ascent (4.ii) in this chapter.

Another important aspect of mankind's capacity to obtain divine knowledge according to Augustine involves the effects of original sin. As he made clear in *Gen. litt.*, original sin had dramatic consequences for the human relationship with God as well as humans' ability to experience God in this lifetime. He emphasizes repeatedly in *Trin.* that in this life, we can only approach Him through a dark mirror, enigmas and faith. A face-to-face *visio Dei* is only possible after the resurrection. The compensation for this predicament is the process mentioned above, of incessant searching and finding as well as strengthened faith. Although we are unable to know or see God completely in this life, it is nonetheless our destiny to do so and in order to do so in the next life, we must believe now in what we now cannot see and in what cannot be grasped with our dominating mode of thinking.

3.iii.c. True knowledge and the *verbum intimum*, the inner word (VIII-X; XIV)¹²⁰

Augustine's conception of *verbum* was mentioned several times in passing in previous sections. In book VIII, where he introduces this term, it is literally translated as 'word'. However the underlying meaning of this term is not very clear here, nor in the exposition in this chapter where it was mentioned. It is only when Augustine describes it again in *Trin.* XIV does its significance begin to coagulate.¹²¹ An inner word signifies a thought, a true thought,¹²² yet one which is not yet spoken (IX.10.15). Augustine explains how a word is brought forth (born) from one's own mind, initially from one's own storehouse of external images in the memory (*phantasia/phantasmata*)¹²³. In order for the

119 An example here of longing for intellectual vision in Plotinus, describing how the human soul desires Intellect: *Enn.* VI.7.20.9-12 referring to the 'Thinking Soul' (Soul-Nous). 'For soul and life are traces (LZ: as in images) of Intellect and it is this Intellect that the soul desires. And so in its judgments also it desires intellect, judging righteousness (*dikaïosunê*) better than unrighteousness, preferring each form of virtue to the form of vice, judging more valuable the same things which it chooses. But if it only desires Intellect, perhaps it might be in need of further reasoning to show that Intellect is not the ultimate and that not all things desire intellect but all things desire the Good.' VI.7.12-19: 'And if they (LZ: souls) seek life, and everlasting existence and activity what they desire is not Intellect in so far as it is Intellect, but in so far as it is good and from the Good and directed to the Good; since this is also with life.' VI.7.21-25.

120 VIII.9.13; IX.7.12-13, 9.14, 11.16 and XV.10.17-18, 11.20, 12.22, 14.24; ch's: 15, 16, 21, 24.

121 Brachtendorf, *Struktur* 154-159, 266-281. Augustine's theory of *verbum* in *Trin.* has led to the notion that he developed a language theory (which will not be dealt with here.) Brachtendorf, *ibid*, 282-314.

122 Secondary literature on Augustine's *verbum* as true knowledge: i.e.: Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 266-269; O'Daly, *Philosophy of Mind*, 140; J. Kreuzer, "Die Sprachlichkeit der Erinnerung. Überlegungen zum *verbum intimum* in Buch XV von *De trinitate*" in: Brachtendorf, Gott, *Bild*, 2000, 183-203; E. Morgan, *The Incarnation of the Word, The Theology of Language of Augustine of Hippo* (London, New York: T & T Clark, 2010).

123 As in e.g. *Gen. litt.* XII.6-11, *Trin.* VIII.5.8, IX.6.10, X.2.4, XI.3.6, 4.7, 5.8, and 10.17.

sense data to become knowledge, it must be formed into thoughts by the workings of *cogitatio*.¹²⁴ Augustine explains that one's own knowledge is true (which constitutes a *verbum*) insofar that it faithfully reflects what one already knows. A 'word' is an image (*imago*) of one's knowledge.

*From this we can gather that when the mind knows and approves itself (se mens ipsa novit atque approbat), this knowledge (notitia) is its word (verbum) in such a way that it matches exactly and is equal to it and identical, since it (LZ: this knowledge) is neither knowledge (notitia) of an inferior thing like body nor of a superior one like God (LZ: that is, this knowledge is self-knowledge). And while any knowledge (notitia) has a likeness to the thing it knows (novit), that is, to the thing it is the knowledge (notitia) of, this knowledge (notitia) by which the knowing mind is known (quae novit, est nota) has a perfect and equal likeness. And the reason it is both image (imago) and word (verbum), is that it is expressed from the mind when it is made equal to it by knowing (cognoscendo) it; and **what is begotten is equal to the begetter**. (IX.11.16)*

This intriguing passage signifies, according to McKenna, that the thought-word arising from self-knowledge is an image of the reality it reflects. Since it is identical to it, thus a perfect image of it, this constitutes perfect knowledge.¹²⁵ McKenna's interpretation is only partially correct. Augustine does indeed say that a *verbum* is a perfect image, yet whether this, according to Augustine, constitutes perfect knowledge is highly unlikely. Furthermore, we must understand this statement in the context of Augustine's motives in *Trin.* as well as his whole epistemology. By claiming that the *verbum* is a perfect *imago* of the *mens* (the first element of the triad *mens-notitia-amor*), the *verbum* is hence equal to *mens* as well as to *notitia*. The *verbum* constitutes the knowledge of the mind and because it images it perfectly, only in that sense is it a true, perfect image. In the long run, Augustine is attempting to illustrate with this passage how the mind is an image of the triune Godhead. The Holy Trinity, as he explained it, includes the Son as a Perfect Image of the Father, as in: '*what is begotten is equal to the begetter*' in the quote above.

The 'perfection' of this human knowledge can only be relevant to the mind or knowledge it images and hence does not necessarily in itself constitute perfect, true (universal) knowledge. A distinct parallel exists here between Augustine's (and Plotinus') theorem of *intellectualis=intelligibilis*, which dictated that intellection is equal to the intelligible (*Gen. litt.* XII.10.21). Hence the *verbum* in the passage above, in which the perfect imaging of the mind is posited, would only exclusively apply to self-knowledge, and more specifically, the self-knowledge which Augustine posits as *se nosse* (as indicated in the Latin terms in the quote). As such, its perfection is of limited value.

A *verbum intimum* in the *mens humana* is derived from the ontological level of the human mind and shares characteristics with matter: it is changeable and temporal. As Augustine expounded in *Gen.*

124 This important term in Augustine's epistemology (used throughout *i.e. Trin.* XI) has no equivalent in modern language. It is often translated as 'thinking'. Although it has some affinities to *verbum* in the sense of 'thought', it is nonetheless a different concept. Cf: Sullivan, *Image of God*, 97-note 50; 111; Gilson, *Introduction*, 282; E. Bermon, *Le Cogitatio dans la pensée de Saint Augustine* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2001) 395-410; T. Breyfogle, "Imagination" *AttA*, 442-443; O'Daly, *Philosophy Mind*, in association with imagination 106-129; Stock, *Inner Dialogue*, 62-120: specifically on his usage in *Trin.*: 111-120. Augustine envisages *cogito* as an important element in narrative philosophy (Stock, *Dialogue*, 62). Note that the conscious self can also be designated by Augustine as *cogito* (*cogito ergo sum*). Recall that Augustine designated the soul in *Gen. litt.* as an individual *ratio* (Plotinus, as *logos*). As such, we can infer that Augustine sees this process of *cogitatio* as taking place in the region of the *ratio inferior*, the region of the soul which involves discursive thought *scientia* [parallel to Plotinus *dianoëtikos* (*logos*)]. *Cogitatio* will be treated in this context in section 3.iii.e. (For the comparison to Plotinus' theory of knowledge, see Chapter VI.3.ii.

125 McKenna, *Trinity*, 37.

litt XII in his theory of three visions, the transiency of material, intramental images are what makes worldly knowledge fallible and not 100% reliable. Their source is the outer visual world. The created, physical world cannot constitute a reliable source of ultimate truth not only because of its temporality and mutability, but also because it only contains remnants of truth (See *Trin.* VIII.6.9, where a *verbum* refers to material images.) Material things, as well as visual intramental images only contain *vestigia* of divine truth.¹²⁶ Thus self-knowledge involving *se cogitare* also produces a *verbum*, a *verbum* of material images (VIII.6.9). In this sense, the thought (*verbum*) is indeed equal to the content of the mind which produces it.¹²⁷ Yet only the *verbum* produced by *notitia sui* complies with the theorem *intellectualis=intelligibilis*. Hence, it approaches universality and also intellectual vision. Engaged in the latter, the soul is illuminated by Wisdom, the *Verbum Dei*, who is ultimate Truth. From this we may deduce that *notitia sui* constitutes a *verbum* corresponding to the other characteristics of a *visio intellectualis*, such as infallibility. Yet we must proceed further in order to get to the bottom of this inquiry.

Human knowledge, like human life, is subject to change. Knowledge (*verba*) can be born and die as in a loss of memory (XV.15.25). Augustine asserts however that certain unchangeable true knowledge is possible for humans to obtain from within themselves. For example: we know that we exist and we do not doubt this.¹²⁸ This knowledge remains certain as long as we exist. However, the *mens humana* does not produce from itself an eternal word. This is because, among other things, human nature cannot keep its attention focused on eternity. On the other hand, the image of God is destined to eternal life and to know eternally that the mind exists. Eternal thought is not the same as contemplating one's own temporal life, nor as knowledge of one's own life history. Because in doing this, we cease thinking of eternity (X.10.14 and 16). This differentiation is important because eternal knowledge is that towards which the *imago Dei* is oriented.

The question now for Augustine, is how to arrive at true knowledge which is not just true for the individual but universally true? How is truth extracted from vestiges which are contained in the intramental physical images? Fortunately the mind has a way to make up for its own infallibility and potential instability: with its rational intelligence, it is able to judge the inner physical images and determine the universal truth in them (X.5.7). To do this, it focuses on the Ideas, which serve as standards or norms of judgment, which he deems often in *Trin.* as 'the eternal principles' and sometimes, as below, *rationes*.¹²⁹

126 *Trin.* VI.10.12; XII.5.5; Vestiges are treated in subsection (e.).

127 Some examples of Augustine's association of *verbum*, *scientia* and material images:

'When our word is true and therefore is rightly called a word, it can be called sight of sight, or knowledge of knowledge (*visio de visione, vel scientia de scientia*). Can it be called essence of essence as that Word of God is called...? For with this, to be is not the same as to know. For we know many things which live in some manner through forgetfulness, and therefore, when they are no longer in our knowledge, yet we are; and when our knowledge has slipped away from us and perished out of our mind, yet we live.' (XV.15.24: McKenna); (LZ: Here Augustine is referring to *se cogitare*, knowledge which is not universally true; this knowledge is not true being and therefore transient.)...'Even with regard to these things which are so known (*sciuntur*) that they can never fall away, since they are present and belong to the nature of the mind itself, such as the knowledge that we live (*nos vivere scimus*) (LZ: He is referring here to *se nosse*—the higher form of self-knowledge.) for this remains as long as the mind remains, and since the mind always remains, so too this knowledge always remains—even with regards to these things, therefore, and other similar things that are found, in which **the image of God** is rather to be beheld, (*potius intuenda est*) though they are always known, yet since they are not also always thought (*cogitare*), **it is difficult to ascertain in what way they can be called an eternal word**, (LZ: as in the *Verbum Dei*) **since our word is spoken in our thought.**' (XV.15.25; McKenna)

128 See Sorabji (*Self*, 2008) on Augustine and Descartes. There is much commentary on Descartes reading of Augustine *Trin.* for his adage *cogito ergo sum*, including authors already mentioned here such as Cary. The notion of 'I think, therefore I am' is present in Plotinus' conception of the divine Intellect: *Enn.* V.3.24–25.

129 See Chapter IV.2.v. on *Rationes* as Ideas in *Gen. litt.*

Therefore we pass judgment upon these particular things according to that form of the eternal truth and we perceive that form through the eye of the rational mind (rationalis mentis intuitu)... For we form images of bodies in our mind or see bodies through the body in one way, but we comprehend in a different way the patterns (rationes) and the ineffably beautiful art ¹³⁰ of such forms, as are above the eye of the mind (aciem mentis), by simple intelligence. (IX.7.11)
(McKenna)

Augustine confirms in *Trin.*, as he did in *Gen. litt.*, that a purely mental visualization derived from visual, material elements which are copies of the archetypal ideals, is subsequently defective. It seldom complies with the norm, the eternal Idea. Furthermore, the mind or memory cannot reproduce the visual object perfectly. Universal or divine knowledge must be acquired through the intellect, (referred to in the quote above as *the eye of the mind...simple intelligence*). While contemplating a divine model (eternal principles), the interiorized data from the physical sense world will be therefore scrutinized by our judgment in light of its corresponding 'standard'. This has to do with 'seeing God's Form' which entails conceiving the truth in an immediate grasp as in intuition, as in a *visio intellectualis*: by which the divine Light of Truth touches the human mind and opens it in order to facilitate further insight. God communicates through the intelligible; true knowledge or wisdom is only acquired by a conversion to the *Verbum Dei*.

Thus in response to the inquiry posed earlier, an inner *verbum* which is universally true, would certainly refer to the knowledge of a corresponding eternal Idea, as opposed to the particular truth of an individual or a group of individuals. Additionally, the theorem that intellectual vision is equal to the sight of the intelligible, is applicable here (IX.7.12). Yet to grasp this truth, the assistance of the *Verbum Dei* is needed: Christ brings us to contemplation of God (for example in I.8.17, XIV.14.20, XV.11.20).

In *Trin.* XV.12.22, Augustine discusses the human *verbum intimum* which he described in books VIII-X in the context of the *Verbum Dei*, Son of God, equal to God the Father.

But that word of ours, which has neither sound nor thought of sound, is the word of that thing which we inwardly speak by seeing it, and therefore belongs to no language, hence in this enigma there is a likeness, be what it may, to the Word of God who is also God since it is also so born from our knowledge as that Word was also born from the knowledge of the Father. (XV.14.24)
(McKenna)

Here he refers to a thought which was not yet expressed in human language (as a literal 'word'). A *verbum* expressed audibly in human language manifests as sound momentarily in the sense world, yet the sounds disappear immediately after the thought is expressed. Augustine indicates in the passage above that it is the meaning of a word, (or really the combination of words), after being heard, which is the real *verbum*, which is retained by the perceiving soul. As such, Augustine contrasts the human word, which is formed from one's mind or self-knowledge, with the eternal Word of God the Father, who is the pure Form of God the Father and purely equal to him (*forma*

130 *artemque ineffabiliter pulchram*; *Ars* is an important term (which however will not be pursued further here) which Augustine uses to signify normative knowledge, as in a standard reference of judgement (e.g.: in the sense of grammar *ars grammatica* in language, e.g.: *Contra Faustum* 22.45) or in judging the (mental) images. *Ars* is also a Form, referring to the formation of a visual, physical image. *Ars* in that sense is unchangeable, eternal. Cf: K.-H. Lütke, "Ars" in A-L. vol.1, (1986-1994), 459-465, i.e. in reference to thinking: *artes liberales, ratiocinando, ars humana/ars divina*.

simplex et simpliciter aequalis...).¹³¹ In this way, the human *verbum* resembles the divine *Verbum*, it is a perfect image of what one knows.¹³² This *verbum intimum* does not pertain to any language; yet it is not an eternal Word as the Son, who is absolute Truth.

Now let us integrate this concept back into the broader context of Augustine's analysis of the trinity of *mens-notitia-amor*. The element love also plays a salient role in Augustine's conception of *verbum intimum* (IX.8.13). While discerning truth, love manifests as an inner appreciation, intuition, approbation or confirmation that a particular knowledge is true conforming to what one knows in one's own mind to be true (VIII.6.9). As such love binds knowledge to the mind. The dynamic interrelation in this triad is what creates a unity in the human mind. In turn, this triad reflects in some vague way the perfect unity of the Holy Trinity (IX.8.13). Hence, through his notions of knowledge, *verbum* and love, Augustine is gradually constructing the relationship between the *imago Trinitatis* and the Holy Trinity; and at the same time, the relationship between the human image, its personal truth *verba* and the *Verbum Dei*, the Perfect Image. The inner workings of the mind's love and knowledge encompass a natural growth process towards God, towards the immaterial, eternal and immutable. Augustine's conviction here is that God's truth and wisdom must be recognized by the individual intuitively in one's conscious experience of one's own love, while in search of ultimate truth. In light of Augustine's ideas on self-knowledge and truth, there are more important remarks to be made on Augustine's conception of self.

3.iii.d. Self-Knowledge and Truth: the Different 'Selves' (*Trin.* X-XI)

In point (b.) we saw how Augustine differentiated two kinds of self-knowledge: both resulted in a word of truth. One was a higher form of self-knowledge, which was universal and pertained to the *imago Trinitatis*. The other contained material images and pertained more to the personal life and thoughts of an individual. These differentiations were embodied respectively in the terms *se nosse* and *se cogitare*. As such it can be asserted that in his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis*, Augustine generally differentiated between two 'selves': a higher and a lower.¹³³ Additionally, in book XI, Augustine distinguished the inner and outer man, inspired by passages in the letters of Paul.¹³⁴ In the next subsection, we will see that this differentiation is constantly present in Augustine's analysis and that it matches up approximately to his differentiation of *se cogitare* and *se nosse*.

Although Augustine did not encourage the neglect of the development of the historical self, it is the *homo interior* to whom he clearly gives preference in the search for God. Due to its capacity to rise to a higher form of consciousness, it can come to a truer understanding of its own mind, as well as of the human mind in a broader sense. The attainment of universal awareness runs parallel to the gradual assimilation of and participation¹³⁵ in the immaterial and divine. In this process of evolution, he also prescribed evolving beyond from the 'I' frame of mind and towards the 'we' consciousness,¹³⁶ wherein one's individual self-knowledge becomes more and more knowledge of 'us', universal knowledge of humanity.

131 It is difficult to find a suitable quote here which is short enough to illustrate this. See XV.10.19: on how the *verbum* is similar to the *Verbum Dei*; XV.11.20 (a long passage -from inner word from heart to outer word- concerning the ascent to reason of the *imago Dei* to true knowledge and then recreation in the afterlife.; Also XV.12.22-24, XV.15.25, 16-26, etc.

132 XV.12.22: 'This is the word (LZ: human word) that belongs to no language, the true word about a true thing, having nothing from itself, but everything from that knowledge from which it is born.' (McKenna)

133 See Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 137.

134 Plato and Plotinus also speak of the inner and outer man; Plotinus: e.g.: *Enn.* III.2.15.59.

135 On how Augustine transformed the Platonic notion of participation: M. Smalbrugge, «La Notion de la Participation chez Augustin. Quelques observations sur le rapport Christianisme-Platonisme» in: B. Bruning, M. Lamberigts, J. van Houtem (eds.) *Collectanea Augustiniana, Mélanges T.J. van Bavel*, (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1990), 333-347.

136 *Trin.* XII.8.13, 9.14, 10.15 and 11.16.

A great deal of literature has been published in the past decade on Augustine's conception of the 'self'.¹³⁷ Many of these publications are not directly relevant to this study because the inquiries are oriented to determining whether Augustine is the source of our contemporary sense of 'individual self.' The present study will not go any further into Augustine's conception of self or enter into these discussions. In C. Taylor's chapter on Augustine's conception of self, he delineated in an adequate way the 'two selves' from Augustine's doctrines which are reflected in the treatment above. However, there are likely other 'selves' which Augustine denotes, one of which Taylor does not mention. That is the highest obtainable self which is now scarcely imaginable for us, because it will be realized in the afterlife at the time of the resurrection. At that time, saintly human souls will become godlike or equal to the angels or Christ. This 'self' will have reached the final destination and obtained a full intellectual vision -as a perfected image of God. Now, to complete the epistemology which complements his analysis of the mental triads, we will proceed to *Trin.* XI-XV. These books are largely devoted to elaborating a theory of knowledge which includes all possible cognitive acts of the human mind: sense perception, imagination, practical reason, faith and understanding in contemplation.

3.iii.e. Sense Perception and Material Images (The Outer Man) (*Trin.* XI)

At the commencement of book XI,¹³⁸ Augustine announces that before being able to truly fathom this higher region, which is 'the inner man', one may not merely skip over 'the outer man'.¹³⁹ In Augustine's commentaries on Genesis he posited that the *imago Dei* could only be the strictly immaterial part of the human being because of God's sheer immateriality. His doctrine was often underpinned by quotes from Paul's letters,¹⁴⁰ 'Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the

137 Augustine's treatment of self-knowledge and self-love in books VIII, IX and X of *Trin.* has been of great interest in the last few decades for his treatment of the conception of self. Some researchers attribute Augustine as being the first to have instigated the concept of 'self' or self-consciousness in the antique world, such as P. Cary: *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self, The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford: University Press, 2000). Others, such as O'Daly, have correctly attributed the invention of the conception of self to Plotinus from where Augustine originally must have obtained his inspiration. Other literature on Augustine's conception of the self: O. Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine*, (New Haven: Yale, 1980); C. Horn, "Selbstbezüglichkeit des Geistes bei Plotin und Augustin", in: Brachtendorf, *Gott, Bild, 81-103*; B. Stock, *Inner Dialogues*; C. Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989); G. Verbeke, "Connaissance de soi et Connaissance de Dieu", *Augustiniana*, IV, 1954, 495-515; R. Sorabji, *Self*; One of the most recent books on Augustine's conception of self is J.-L. Marion's *In the Self's Place: The Approach of St. Augustine*, (English translation: Jeffrey L. Kosky), (Stanford: University Press, 2012). Marion's work is based on *Conf.* however and not *Trin.*

138 Williams: 'Book 11 does not contribute substantially to the main argument, but spells out ways in which the processes of sense perception form a kind of image in the external life of the human subject of the inner three-foldedness under discussion.' (*Trinitate*, 849). Williams gives an excellent summary of Book XI, but is mistaken when he says that this book does not contribute substantially to the main argument. Brachtendorf on the other hand, demonstrates the ascent beginning with book 11 which continues to book XII, leading to the contemplation of the eternal (Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 194-199).

139 'Are we already then in a position to rise with all our powers of concentration to that supreme and most high being of which the human mind is the unequal image, but the image nonetheless? Or have we still to clarify the distinctions between these three (LZ: memory-knowledge-love/will) in the soul by comparing them with our sensitive grasp of things outside, in which the awareness of bodily things is imprinted on us in a time sequence?' (X.12.19)
'No one will doubt that just as the inner man is endowed with understanding, so is the outer man with sensation. Let us try then if we can to pick out some trace of trinity in this outer man too. Not that he is also the image of God in the same way as the inner man;' (XI.1.1)

140 Augustine associates Pauline verses (Col. 3: 1-10, 2 Cor. 4:6) directly to his interpretation of the image of God as the intellect (*Gen. litt.* III.20.30) (Chapter IV.3.ii.a.). Many references are made to Paul in *Trin.* as well (XIV.16.22-19.25). E.g.: the 'new man' which in the context of the *imago Dei* is further associated with the 'inner man' (XI.1.1). Augustine distinguished between 'the inner and outer man', also based upon statements of Paul regarding putting off the old self and putting on the new (e.g. *Trin.* XIV.16.22).

new man, who is being renewed unto the knowledge of God, according to the image of his Creator.' (Col. 3:10) and employing as well Paul's distinction between 'the inner man' with 'the outer man': 'Even if our outer man is decaying, the inner man is being renewed from day to day.' (2 Cor. 4:16). As in *Gen. litt*, Augustine delineates this distinction in *Trin.* in the following way: the outer man is that life in man which remains on the sense level, whether externally or internally perceived. The inner man, the site of the image, is specifically that human life which is rational and intellectual. This distinction further substantiates Augustine's strategy in defining human nature, the mind and its relationship to the Holy Trinity. Hence, book XI is devoted to analyzing the trinities found in sense perception of the exterior human, which are the least stable of all inner images due to their transiency and changeability. The subject matter discussed in this book is important for two reasons: it establishes Augustine's (Neo-Platonist) hierarchy of realities encountered in the ascent and provides the background for how a human acquires knowledge, which will be developed in the *Trin.* XII and XIII concerning *scientia* and *sapientia*. After book XI, his epistemology (in books XI-XIII) will proceed in the form of a gradual ascent.

In his exegesis of Genesis, Augustine indicated that the exterior world of a person and all the visible objects around us we see, cannot be considered an 'image', because only the highest part of the human soul can qualify for this designation, on the grounds that it can acquire knowledge of God and become a perfect image of God. Other creatures and things, (including the human body) which are perceptible to the physical senses are, in the framework of his theory of Ideas, actually images too, but in a different sense than the *imago Dei*. In the first place, material things are images of Ideas. The human soul is an image of a deity, yet with a pregnant relation to the Ideas in the Creator. In *Trin.* XI-XIII, Augustine returns to this matter to explain it anew in the context of his conception of God as the Holy Trinity. In Chapter IV (2.viii.) in *Gen. litt* we noted that Augustine was apparently unwilling to designate material things as 'images' (as in 'images of Ideas' -as the Platonists did). Now in *Trin.*, he sets out to prove that the whole of the universe, the whole of nature and its operations are permeated with threefold traces or 'vestiges' which reflect the triune Godhead.¹⁴¹ (See the Plotinian equivalent in the note below.¹⁴²) *Vestigia* are therefore relevant in the context of book XI, where Augustine expounds his theory of the exterior man. He illustrates there the relationship of the vestiges to its author, various trinitarian analogies in reference to the outer man¹⁴³ and two in particular. The first one, he calls a trinity of external vision, pertaining wholly to the external senses: the sense of sight (the object of vision *res*, the vision thereof *visio*, and the mind's intention *animi intentio* (XI.2). The sense of sight, he observes, is the closest in nature to the vision or sight of the mind (XV.3.5). The second trinity of external man is a trinity of internal vision, a natural extension of the first trinity, being observed in how the external senses bring information inwards and create a more inward trinity. It involves the *imagines* or *phantasiae*. The trinity effectuated in this way consists of: memory, internal vision, and will. *Voluntas* is required here to join the initial two: *memoria*

141 *Trin.* VI.10.12, XII.5.5; On vestiges see Sullivan, *Image of God*, 86.

142 Plotinus uses the term *ichnos* translated as 'trace' as synonym for 'image' (e.g. *eikôn*) as in the Soul-the image of the Intellect; the Intellect-image of the One (*Enn.* VI.7.15.9-10, 17, 18.1-15, VI.7.20). He uses this term as well to depict the equivalent as above: how the divine is present in material things or bodies, although this manifestation is not itself in any way the divine itself (e.g.: the image as *eidôlon*) (Chapter III.2.i).

143 S. Macdonald gives a critical evaluation of Augustine's claims here. Cf: "Augustine's Cognitive Voluntarism" in: Bermon, *Trinitate*, 235-250.

sensibilis, interna visio, voluntas quae utrumque copulat (XI.3.6).¹⁴⁴ When these three are combined into one, they form what Augustine defines as *cogitatio*. (This important term will be explained further in the context below.) The second trinity of the outer man described above forms a bridge to the trinities in the inner man, which will lead to acquiring true knowledge-wisdom, associated with becoming an *imago Dei*. The trinities of the outer man, as already mentioned, are not images of the divine Trinity (XI.5.8). The trinities of the outer man are countless: the inner imaginary visions of the thinking person multiply and change in recollection and do this in countless numbers of ways (XI.8).

In Augustine's analysis of the triads, these aspects of the outer man become increasing more inward and approach the *homo interior*. The latter makes up a part of the *mens*, which mentioned in *Gen. litt*, was the location of the *imago Dei*. Now in *Trin.* Augustine is striving here for differentiation of the rational soul or *mens*. In *Trin.* X., this differentiation was indeed sharpened, as we already saw, in the two types of self-knowledge and various *verba*. Memory was already indicated as an essential component of the most important trinity of the intellect in Book X.¹⁴⁵ The functioning of the memory for Augustine is not limited to recollection of the past, it is also a function which enables a person to develop a relationship to oneself (as in reflecting upon oneself: remembering or recalling oneself.) It is thus the mental facility which possesses self-awareness and through this self-consciousness, it resembles the Holy Trinity.

Augustine explains human memory in relation to God in the following way: memory is instrumental for developing a relationship to anything whatsoever by acquiring consciousness of it and then later recalling it. Anything which serves as an object of reflection requires the exercise of one's memory for continuous or repeated meditations. Memory is what permits us to return to transient thoughts which sometimes escape us, such as our experiences of God or the completely immaterial, eternal reality. In *Conf.* VII, Augustine insisted that the will was too weak to remain in God's light. He pointed out here that human memory, too, was defective. Even though we have experienced God before, we forget Him all too easily (*Trin.* XII.14.23).

Hence, Augustine designates memory as the primary facility for knowledge acquisition. The mental images pertaining to the outer human supply the memory with information (our modern term: 'stimuli') which will be processed into knowledge (*scientia*). But the question is how these images become knowledge? The other knowledge-gathering function of the mind falls under the term *cogitatio*.¹⁴⁶ This term denotes the collecting and bringing together of data transmitted from outside of oneself from the physical experiential world into the memory, processing the data into knowledge. Through *cogitatio*, knowledge is thus committed to memory and is retrieved as well (in spite of it being forgotten from time to time). Thus Augustine connects *cogitatio* to *memoria* as well as to the conscious doings of the will, the intention of one's gaze, representing them as the mental cogs and wheels in the process of knowledge acquisition functioning interdependently.¹⁴⁷ *Cogitare* is also

144 XI.3.6: 'Even when if the form of the body is taken away which was perceived by the bodily senses, there remains a likeness of it in the memory to which the will can again turn the attention to be formed by it from within, just as the sense was formed from without, by the sensible corporal object presented to it.' Nb: Augustine says here that the mind as 'will' is formed by the mental pictures, just as the sense of sight is formed by corporeal images. This formation is the work of *cogitatio*.

145 The human memory is not a reflection of 'God's memory'. The latter is not possible because human memory is completely temporally oriented, while God's mind is eternal, not temporal. In God, memory and foresight are one and the same (*Trin.* XV.7.13).

146 See note 124.

147 C. Tornau provides a good summary of Augustine's epistemology in the latter books of *Trin.* He also indicates that Augustine has various terms for the cognitive faculty of the mind, such as *contuitus, obtutus, cogitato and intellegentia*. «The Background of Augustine's Triadic Epistemology in *De Trinitate* 11-15, A Suggestion" in: Bermon, *Trinitate*, 251-266.

the verb Augustine uses to describe the lower kind of self-understanding and self-knowing which is present in daily state of consciousness (*Trin.* X.4.6).

This brings Augustine to the question as to how these fleeting mental (material) images can eventually signify universal truth? In order to obtain universally true knowledge, one must necessarily pass through the realm of vestiges, those of the external man and proceed to the inner man. His treatment of memory and mental images in Book XI forms the stepping stones to the ascent to the consciousness in which knowledge becomes progressively less material, returning to his exegesis of Gen. 1:26 of the image of God (concentrated in XII.6.6-7.12).¹⁴⁸ This elevation will ultimately lead up to wisdom and to the source of Wisdom (XII.5.5), which is delineated in book XII and onwards.

3.iii.f. Lower and Higher Knowledge: Interior Man (XII and XIII)

Starting with XII.12.17, Augustine proceeds to differentiate true knowledge, distinguishing in the rational soul *mens* a higher and lower level of reasoning, *ratio superior* and *ratio inferior*. It is the task of higher reason to judge material things or internal material images according to immaterial eternal principles. Lower reason is that which manages and maintains things of matter, sense and temporality (XII.4.4).¹⁴⁹ *Ratio superior* and *inferior* are complementary. Both are necessary for mental functioning, for the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom. Trinities can be found in the realm of *ratio inferior* but they do not image the Holy Trinity. The *imago Dei* is only in the *ratio superior* (XII.4.4, 7.10).

His two categories of knowledge, *scientia* and *sapientia*¹⁵⁰ correspond generally to the differentiation of lower and higher reason (XII.12.17).¹⁵¹ Augustine describes the two kinds of knowledge as in a kind of marriage between contemplation and action: wisdom pertains to contemplation,¹⁵² science to action (XII.12.19). Yet the limits of the Augustine's definitions of *scientia* and *sapientia* are not so strictly defined as with *ratio superior* and *inferior*. *Scientia* is also needed for eternal life, it constitutes the reason-oriented attention which focuses on material things, in order to form knowledge and to improve one's mind and one's life. Unlike *sapientia*, *scientia* encompasses negative potentials, for instance: acquiring knowledge for the sake of knowledge itself (for the sake of one's status, to boost one's pride) and not for the sake of truth; or as a distraction from God. These dangers can be overcome, Augustine adds, by love for the eternal goods: a love which is always expansive and constructive.

148 In XII.6.6-7.12, Augustine returns to an extensive treatment of the *imago Dei* in a variety of contexts, many of which were already covered in earlier books. This includes his discussion of incorrect interpretations of Gen 1:16 (6.7) and the incorporeal image as location of renewal by the grace of God (XII.7.11)

149 Hill, *Trinity*, 322. L. Schumacher correctly identifies the correspondences between Augustine's notion of *ratio inferior* and *superior*, *scientia* and *sapientia* in *Trin.* to his theory of corporeal, spiritual and intellectual visions in *Gen. litt* XII ("Theo-logic", 384-385).

150 Williams, "*Sapientia*"; Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 199-205; R. Nash, *The Light of the Mind*, 60-92. On p. 5 Nash provides a table of Augustine's epistemological ascent.

151 XII.8.13; 12.17. Here Augustine describes *scientia* and *sapientia* as symbolized by Adam and Eve (XII.13.20: Adam and Eva are as one person: Adam, the male, immaterial principle, symbolizes higher reason; Eva, the female, physical principle, the lower. Both sinned. Every human is or has an *imago Dei*, irrespective of gender (XII.7.10). In XII.9.14, Augustine treats the fall of the souls of Adam and Eve. Torchia points out: '*Sin in this primal sense* (LZ: in the allegory of Adam and Eve) constitutes a fall from mind's contemplation of eternal truths through a proud lust for domination, a carnal lust for sensual pleasure or curious lust for images and phantasms.' (*Curiositas*, 177). See Chapter IV.3.iv.b., c. and e.

152 Ayres describes Augustine's use of contemplation in his earlier works which includes *visio intellectualis* from *Gen. litt.* as the highest level of understanding. Ayres connects this to Augustine's doctrine of faith in the sense of the contemplation of things we do not yet now, in order to strive for the final blessed vision (Ayres, *Trinity*, 150-152).

Scientia is on the other hand, indispensable for acquiring virtues in order to live well (XII.13.21). Wisdom can also pertain to science yet this sagacity is focused on worldly matters. Augustine gives an example of wise science referring to Job 28:28: '*Behold, piety is wisdom, while to abstain from evil things is knowledge (scientia)*'. He explains, in this age in which we are now living, we are in the midst of evil. We abstain from evil by striving for the good, living virtuously and orienting ourselves to eternal matters. All that we do which is reasonable, strong, in moderation and just, is involved with science. This is the discipline through which our activity moves, avoiding evil and striving for the good. From historical *scientia* (such as the Incarnation of Christ) we collect examples from which we can learn (XII.14.22-23).

Sapientia is further distinguished from *scientia* in that it involves things which are not of the past or the future, but of eternal, unchangeable being, immaterial realities which are present to the glimpse of the intellect. A gaze at the non-spatial, immobile eternal concepts is intended only for a few, for the majority of us are too weak to hold on to it.¹⁵³ Memory holds an important function in acquiring science: it provides the mind with reproductions of material visual images which one had once perceived, processing them to produce knowledge, thereby forming ideas into science. One recalls the lessons learned of those images. Additionally, one remembers God, which we could call an intellectual memory which in effect entails 'imaging God'. This would not include phantasms but something which the *imago Trinitatis* achieves in contemplation (XII.14.22-3). The memory is also helpful for training oneself to see God.¹⁵⁴

In sum, Augustine defines as such the parameters of the realm of the *imago Dei* in terms of *sapientia*, the *ratio superior* and contemplation. Although *scientia* and *ratio inferior* pertain to the inner man, because of their connection to the world of the outer man, they do not belong to the realm of the intellect-*imago Dei*. We saw a similar differentiation in Augustine's conception of self-knowledge. The higher functioning self-knowledge involved the intellectualization of *se nosse*: perceiving one's existence by intuitive and immediate insight. This included perceiving oneself as image of God and judging one's deficiencies. Lower self-knowledge entailed discursive reasoning, the activities of *se cogitare* (XV.7.12). Augustine assured the possibility of reaching *sapientia* through *scientia* through one's own reasoning, but in most cases the mind required divine assistance to accomplish this (XII.17.23).¹⁵⁵ This passage illustrates the transition between these two types of knowledge.

Our knowledge (scientia) is therefore Christ and our wisdom is the same Christ. It is He who plants faith in us about temporal things, He who presents us with the truth about eternal things. Through Him we go straight toward Him, through knowledge (scientia) to wisdom. Without ever turning aside from the one and the same Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3) (XIII.19.24)

153 *Trin.* XII.14.23. This chapter, which describes the *Rationes*, faithfully mirrors the description of the Ideas in *De Ideis* (*Div. Qu.* 46), a work from the 380's. It is perhaps not a coincidence that in XII.15.24, Augustine brings up Plato's doctrine of *anamnesis* (the pre-existent soul and its recollection of the Ideas) and refutes it (which he also did in *Conf.* X). Hill is critical of Augustine for insufficiently explaining how memory relates to contemplating the Ideas and remembering wisdom. It is '*the Achilles heel of his theory of knowledge*' (Hill, *Trinity*, 339, note 64).

154 *i.e.*: XIV.11.14, 13.17, 14.18, 15.21 and XV.28.51. *Cf.*: Hill, *Trinity*, 339 and Ayres, *Trinity*, 273-318, 304-318.

155 For more on Augustine's depiction of Christ elevating a person's mind from *scientia* to *sapientia*, see Studer, *Trinitate*, 223.

As illustrated here, Christ is the Trinitarian person whose mission it is to endow humans with both kinds of knowledge as well as to install faith into their minds. (Augustine's doctrine of faith in *Trin.* will be elaborated on in the next point.) Faith is deemed as a kind of *scientia* and an important step for fathoming the eternal and immaterial, as in understanding God as Trinity (XIII.1.2-2.5). It is essential here, he posits, because God and the Trinity are only intelligible to a limited extent, exceeding the limits of human understanding.

Let us now form a short synthesis of Augustine's doctrine of *homo interior* and the two kinds of knowledge: it is the image of God, the intellect, which longs for and has a propensity for true knowledge, wisdom or *sapientia*. It strives to evolve its worldly knowledge based upon temporal, material images to pure, universal knowledge without the material images, to wisdom coming forth from the illumination of Christ (XII.12.17). The question could be raised as to whether Augustine identified obtaining *se nosse* -self-knowledge on the highest level- with *sapientia*. This would be a plausible inference, under the condition that self-knowledge was acquired while focused on Christ. Likewise science would be the knowledge obtained by the outer self, the old or historical self: the consciousness in our daily lives, characterized by incomplete or temporal knowledge.

Thus in the last two books of *Trin.*, Augustine described a transformation of the self in association with the consciousness of the *imago Dei/Trinitatis* in a gradual course of development from the outer to inner man as far as in the afterlife and resurrection; a transformation to the perfection of the image and a complete vision of God.¹⁵⁶ There are indeed many correspondences to be found here in Plotinus' epistemology; in particular, his distinction between *dianoêtikon*, the discursive mode of thinking and *noêsis*, intellectual contemplation; as well as his designation of the intellect as the true self. Yet this comparison requires a more extensive elaboration which will therefore take place in Chapter VI.3.ii.d. and e.

3.iii.g. Faith and Future Knowledge (Searching and Finding)

In different contexts throughout *Trin.*, Augustine asserts his conviction of the necessity of believing in order to understand. For example, in the context of his conception of the procession of the Holy Trinity in book IV (pertaining to the rule of faith, as he called it in XV.28.51) and also in reference to obtaining divine knowledge, via an ascent from *scientia* to *sapientia*.¹⁵⁷ Faith is thus an important facet of his epistemology, considered as a kind of knowledge in itself. In book XIII Augustine ascribed faith to the knowledge of temporal things (*scientia*) and not *sapientia*.¹⁵⁸ Ayres' insights are helpful to interject here. He highlights that Augustine's main concern, is expounding the relationship between *scientia* and *sapientia* and especially the sort of *scientia* which is necessary to faith which will draw us to *sapientia*. This has a parallel in the two natures of Christ, which was explained by

156 e.g.: XIV.17 23.18-24, 19-25.

157 *Trin.* VIII.4.7; XII.5.8; XIII.1.2, 3,4; XIV. 2.4-5, 9.12, 19.24, 20.25-26; XV.1.3, 2.2, 2.4; 3, 27.49; On Augustine's notion of faith in *Trin.*: Cf: L. Ayres, *Trinity*, faith in various contexts 147-170; Fattal, *Plotin chez Augustin*, 38-39; M. Smalbrugge, *La Nature Trinitaire de l'Intelligence Augustinienne de la Foi*, dissertation University of Amsterdam, Netherlands (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998). E. te Selle, "Faith", *AttA*, 347-350.

158 In Plotinus' philosophy, the equivalent kind of knowledge to Augustine's *scientia* -based upon material images- was generally thought to be *doxa*-opinion, not true knowledge (<*dokê*>). It is likely that Augustine's designation of faith as *scientia* refers to the Platonist conception of *doxa* in the general sense above, as knowledge which is not verified as universally true. Augustine intends faith to be understood as a temporary knowledge, a guideline which will be replaced in time with true understanding. As such, faith could be a kind of *doxa*-opinion as well. *Doxa*, as it occurs in the New Testament, has a broader meaning sometimes coinciding with 'conviction' (<*pistis*> (i.e.: Matt. 3:9, Luke 24:37, 2 Cor. 11:16 etc.). There are many examples of *dokê* in the New Testament used in the sense of 'to appear'. Is Augustine integrating an element of Plotinus' epistemology with the New Testament in a philological and conceptual manner?

Augustine in book IV, regarding the eternal Word and the Incarnation. One's faith grows and is shaped by the *scientia* of Christ's life and that this *scientia* by reading Scripture leads to *sapientia*. Essentially, the one divine Person of Christ embodies both *scientia* and *sapientia* in his two natures. However, Augustine says, knowledge based upon belief is not the knowledge acquired by the *imago Dei* (XIII.20.26). Evidently there is a difference between man's faith in Christ (*scientia*) and the contemplation of Christ (*sapientia*), the latter of which encompasses the understanding of the former and indeed pertains to the intellect-image of God.

L. Ayres correctly perceives the explicit connection between Augustine's doctrine of faith and spiritual exercise, in regard to Augustine's struggle to imagine the Holy Trinity or its immaterial, immutable reality in all its diversity. He explains Augustine's view that *exercitatio* is instrumental for comprehending the structure of the Incarnation. It is the Incarnation itself which provides such an exercise and is as such the supplier of faith. *Exercitatio mentis*, like faith, Ayres adds, plays a clear central role in Augustine's anthropology. Mental exercise stimulates reformation of the image, as in overcoming the obsession with the material imagery and fleshy manifestation of Christ.¹⁵⁹ Augustine also emphasizes that it is of importance to find a viable faith that will appropriately enable us to grow in love of something that will actually come to be realized.

Sometimes faith is accorded to things that are false...what we hope for is that faith in true things will eventually be transformed into the things themselves; and it is hardly right to say "Faith is vanished" when things that used to be believed come to be seen. Yet it can no longer be called faith...seeing that faith is defined in the letter to the Hebrews as being the conviction of things that are not seen (Heb.11:1). (XIII.1.3)

In the quote above we see a continuity of his criticism of Manichaean faith based upon a faulty and materialistic theology which failed to lead to truth and thus did not stimulate substantial knowledge (Chapter II.1.i.d; *Conf.* III.6.10). He assures that in the long run, true knowledge will eventually replace faith. Complete knowledge of God (in the *visio Dei*) is, however, only possible in the afterlife. Further, Augustine posits a particular strategy –of searching *quaerere* and finding *invenire*–¹⁶⁰ in conjunction with faith, which is of seminal interest to his epistemology. It contributes to resolving some of the tension between his position on the incomprehensibility of God and positive knowledge of God. '*Fides quaerit, intellectus invenit. Faith searches, the intellect finds.*' (XV.1.1 and 2.2).

The safest intent, after all, until we finally get where we are intent on getting and where we are stretching out to, is that of the seeker. And the right intent is the one that sets out from faith. The certitude of faith at least initiates knowledge; but the certitude of knowledge will not be completed until after this life when we see face to face (1 Cor. 13:12). Let this then be what we set our minds on, to know that a disposition to look for the truth is safer than one to presuppose that we know what is in fact unknown. Let us there so look as men who are going to find, as so find as men who are going to go on looking. For when a man is finished, then it is that he is beginning. (Sir.18:7) (IX.1.1)

159 Ayres, "Christological Context", 101, 117-118.

160 His treatment of *quaerere et invenire* in *Trin.*, e.g.: IX.1.1 and XV.2.2-3. Cf: S. Katz, "Seek-find" in: *AttA*, 760-761.

In the quest for true knowledge one must necessarily begin with faith. In this life we only have the certitude of faith; in the next life, the certitude of knowledge.¹⁶¹ Augustine equates 'searching' with desiring or longing for; and 'finding' with receiving a certain degree of gratification. The object of the search, the understanding of God, can never truly be completely 'found' in a single instance, only in piecemeal discoveries, harbored by strong desire. As such, he encourages a never ending quest in which one is continuously discovering truth anew. In his 'Prayer to the Trinity' (XV.28.51) Augustine again relates the activities of 'searching and finding' to coming to an understanding of God. '*Give me the strength to seek, You who have caused me to find You, and have given me the hope of finding You more and more.*' (McKenna). In this sense, one must persevere, with the help of God, in the desire to experience God in order to keep discovering him. '*May I remember You, understand You and love You. Increase these things in me until You have reformed me completely.*' Note that he is referring here to the second triad from book X: *memoria-intellegentia-amor* which forms the best *imago Trinitatis*. He infers here that longing for knowledge of God (longing for or loving God) must be augmented, expanded and reinforced in order to persist in the goal of perfecting of one's image to the greatest extent during earthly existence. Faith serves as well as an aid in persevering through the difficulties of this life.

3.iii.h. Synthesis of Sections ii and iii: The *Imago Trinitatis*: Intellect and Epistemology

Augustine's terms 'intellect' or the triune *imago Dei* can be characterized in the following way: as a state of consciousness differentiated from the cognitive faculties used in normal, daily activities in the outer world. It is a contemplative or meditative frame of mind which has as object itself or that which is above itself, such as the eternal, divine Ideas or the three divine Trinitarian persons (all of which constitute 'divine knowledge'). It has an inherent hunger for ultimate truth. By contemplating the divine Ideas, it is thus able to judge information and discern what is ultimately false. The intellect perceives the relationship of something to God and its degree of resemblance or dissemblance to the divine. It includes self-contemplation, by which it judges itself, how it falls short of being a perfect image of God.

The elevated awareness of the intellect-*imago Trinitatis* involves an intuition or the immediate apprehension of truth by divine illumination, complying with Augustine's definition of *visio intellectualis* in *Gen. litt.* XII. His conception of the intellect-image includes a mental and spiritual development (typified by 'seeking and finding') which is strongly inclined towards universal wisdom, specifically that of a transcendent, unchanging character, *sapientia*. This consciousness is differentiated from analytical discursive thinking and the cognitive processes of producing knowledge from the visible world of material images. This corresponds to Augustine's designation of the human soul in *Gen. litt.* as an individual *ratio*. *Scientia* corresponds to this mode of consciousness as well in absorbing information from the exterior world which does contain a certain truth. Yet this truth is often limited to the personal or particular (*verbum intimum*) and is therefore unlikely to be universally applicable or to the divine.¹⁶² *Scientia* requires Christ's illumination in order to become *sapientia* as does a *verbum* in order to become a higher universal truth or wisdom administered by Christ, *Verbum Dei*. The lower rational soul comprises Augustine's view of the old, historical self. The new self, which is acquired by gradual reformation, is the image of God. Augustine's differentiation of

161 IX.1.1 and XV.27.49. In IX.1.1, Augustine underscores Paul's statements (1 Cor. 8:2-3): '*If anybody thinks he knows anything, he does not yet know as he ought to know. But anyone who loves God, this man is known to Him.*'

162 In my view, the differentiation of our normal mode of thinking and the consciousness of the *imago Dei* parallels Augustine's distinction between spiritual and intellectual vision (*Gen. litt.* XII. 6.15, *et al.*).

the rational soul can be represented in a table, those pertaining to the image of God are on the right hand side.

<i>Se cogitare</i> (self-knowledge)	<i>Se nosse</i> (self-knowledge)
<i>Scientia</i>	<i>Sapientia</i>
<i>Ratio inferior</i>	<i>Ratio superior</i>
<i>Homo exterior</i>	<i>Homo interior</i>
Historical self	New self

It is assumed here that self-knowledge as in *se nosse*, refers to intellectual vision, as well as to a *verbum* which is obtained by contemplating the Ideas. *Nb.*: Although *sapientia* has a universal or divine character, we can infer that Augustine intended that true self-knowledge while contemplating Christ will result in *sapientia*.

Throughout this exposition on the *imago Trinitatis*, we have seen that Augustine's conception of God within his discussion of the human image was highly diversified. Yet basically, it boils down to this: the transformation of ordinary consciousness through a strong relationship with the Perfect Image, *Verbum Dei*, Christ in his two natures which expands to include the consciousness of oneself as an image of the Holy Trinity. The higher consciousness of the *imago Trinitatis* includes the same characteristics of intellectual vision which can differ in degree and intensity.

Additionally, *Trin.* is abundant with spiritual exercises which contribute to the development of one's mind to the consciousness of the image of God. These exercises (particularly in books VIII-X) comprise an exploration of the triadic and immaterial frame of mind in its facets of knowledge and love. By reading these books carefully and with full attention, the mind becomes focused on its innermost self, the pure immaterial intellect where no false self-images are present. Exercising the intellect in this way could loosen up the exclusive focus on the historical self and promote awareness of attitudes and intramental pathways which one has not yet tread upon. It could also include expanding one's perspective from the 'I' to the 'we' or a number of other things, such as attempting to envision the Incarnation of Christ or the Godhead as Holy Trinity. Augustine's postulation of the unfathomable and ineffable nature of the divine Trinity has an important counterpart: his encouragement to persist in longing and searching for the experience of eternity and infinity in good faith that one will actually encounter it. Therefore Augustine prescribed exercising the mind, contemplation, meditation and prayer in order to approach becoming a perfect image of God, and to increase one's awareness of eternity and infinity. In Augustine's epistemology, there are many parallels to be found in Plotinus' philosophy which I mentioned in the text but also sometimes summarized in footnotes. In Chapter VI.3 these similarities will be examined in more detail and in consideration of Augustine's whole doctrine of the *imago Dei*. There is a general consensus that Augustine must have consulted the following treatises of the *Enneads* for his epistemology in *Trin*: *Enneads* V.1, V.3 and V.5. This important note will be illustrated in Chapter VI.3.ii.

3.iv. Augustine's Doctrine of Love in *Trin.*¹⁶³

3.iv.a. Introduction: Defining the Frontiers of the Element Love in this Study

In no other work in which Augustine interprets *Gen. litt.* 1:26-27, the *imago Dei*, is the theme of love treated so extensively as in *Trin.*¹⁶⁴ His doctrine of love in *Trin.* has many angles. For instance, he equates the terms love *amor* and will *voluntas*¹⁶⁵ and intricately intertwines his notion of love with will¹⁶⁶ in the context of the intramental trinities and self-knowledge. Yet in Augustine's thinking the elements love and will can also have distinct significances. For instance, he also applied the notion of *voluntas* to his notion of *cogitatio* (*Trin.* XI), the activity of willingly focusing upon an object and becoming conscious of it, the result being that it later appears as an image in the memory. Retrieving this image also entails a conscious act of the will and creating knowledge from the images as well. Yet regarding the triads in his depiction of the *imago Trinitatis*, love and will are extensions of one another and practically synonymous. Additionally, the element *voluntas* conjoined with love, -just as the elements knowledge and mind-, also has its divine counterpart in the Trinitarian Godhead: the Holy Spirit as divine Will. The semantic affinity between love and will becomes more clear when regarding the mental trinities as actual activities in the mind, as loving and 'to be willing', which inspire further semantic variations, such as 'willing', 'wanting' and an associative step further: 'desiring and longing for'.¹⁶⁷ The latter are in fact of major interest here. Thus this section will focus

163 I extend my thanks to Dr. Martijn Schrama OSA for his personal comments on this section of my research as well as his articles in Dutch on Augustine's view of love, desire and prayer.

Secondary literature on Augustine's treatment of love in *Trin.*: I. Bochet, *Saint Augustin: Le Désir de Dieux*, (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1982); J. Burnaby, *Amor Dei, A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine*, (Eugene, Oregon, USA: Wipf and Stock, 1938, 1991, 2007); R. Canning, *The Unity of Love for God and Neighbor in St. Augustine*, (Louvain: Augustinian Historical Institute, 1993); D. Dideberg, A.L. (vol. 1: 1986-1994): "*Amor*", 294-300; "*Caritas*", 730-743; "*Dilectio*", 435-453.; O. O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine*, (New Haven: Yale Press, 1980); A. Louth, "Love and Trinity and the Greek Fathers", *Augustinian Studies* (2002), vol. 33, 1, 1-16; J. Rist, *Augustine Deformed, Love, Sin and Freedom in the Western Moral Tradition*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2014); *ibid*, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); *ibid*, "Love and Will around *De Trinitate* XV 20 38" in: J. Brachtendorf, *Gott, Bild*, 205-218; R.J. Teske, "Love of Neighbor in Augustine" in: *Studia Ephemeridis «Augustinianum»* 26; (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1987), 69-80; T.J. van Bavel, "Love", *AttA*, 509-516; *ibid*, *Augustinus: Van liefde en vriendschap*, (Baarn: Het Wereldvenster, 1970); English: *Christians in the World: Introduction to the Spirituality of St. Augustine*, (New York: Catholic Book Publishing, 1980); Deutsch: *Christ in dieser Welt. Augustinus zu Fragen seiner und unserer Zeit*, (Würzburg: Augustinus Verlag, 1974); *ibid*, "The Double Face of Love, The Daring Inversion: Love Is God" in: *Studia Ephemeridis «Augustinianum»* 26, (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1987) 81-102; *ibid*, *Augustinus van Hippo, Over de Drie-eenheid* ingeleid en vertaald door T.J. van Bavel (Louvain: Peeters, 2005) (The introduction in Dutch is very helpful.); van Geest, *Incomprehensibility*, 101-106, 138, 170-174.

164 'Love is Augustine's favorite subject.', van Bavel writes, 'I don't know of any other Christian author who has gone so far to identify loving others with the love of God.'; On the primacy of love in Augustine's doctrines: van Geest, *Incomprehensibility*, 106, 170. / Augustine also treats love in other works, e.g.: *Conf. X*; his analysis of the Epistle to the Galatians 45 and his sermons on the First Letter of John 8:4; van Bavel, *Augustinus*, 2005, 458-459.

165 C. Harrison, *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity*, (Oxford: University, 2000), 88-106; J. Rist, "Augustine on Free Will and Destination" in: Markus, *Augustine: A Collection*, 218-252; *ibid*, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized*, Ch. 5: Will, Love and Right Action, 148-202; *ibid*, "Love and Will around *De Trinitate* XV.20.38", 205-218; *ibid*, *Augustine Deformed*, chapters 1-3; M. Djuth, "Will", *AttA*, 881-885; P. Rigby "Original Sin", *AttA*, 607-614; C. Horn, "Anthropologie" in: V. H. Drecoll (ed.), *Augustin Handbuch*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007); *ibid*, *Augustinus*, (München: C.H. Beck, 1995, 2013), "Der Wille als Amor", 132-137 (1995); S.E. Beyers, *Perception, Sensibility, and Moral Motivation in Augustine, A Stoic-Platonic synthesis*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2003) 88-99.

166 Equating love with will might seem at first sight to be a peculiarity, because in modern thinking, love is generally regarded as pertaining to the emotional, or irrational or even somewhat to the unconscious; the human will as a conscious, rational, driving force in the individual. Augustine's designation of *voluntas* as certain conscious intention does approach to a certain extent the modern connotation, but not a separate facility. See the studies of Rist above.

167 Augustine's terminology for the English word 'desire': *appetitus*, *concupiens*, *cupiens*.

on Augustine's explicit mentioning of love, which will include desires or longings, as well as in another sense: 'searching' and 'finding' as exemplified in *Trin.* IX.12.18. It will strive to make a synthesis of Augustine's general conception of love for the sake of discussing salient points in Plotinus' notion of *Eros* in Chapter VI.

We will begin with Augustine's terminology of 'love' (b.) and his biblical sources for his doctrine of this element (c.). From that point on, the treatment will proceed to a general overview of Augustine's treatment of love and knowledge of the *imago Trinitatis* from books VIII-IX. First, the notion of divine love (as treated in section 2.v of this chapter 'Godhead') will be summarized in (d.). Then we will recapitulate *Trin.* VIII-X in point (e.), yet highlighting the function of the element love in the trinity *mens-notitia-amor*, that is, *amor* in the human image of the Trinity. The following topics will then be considered: self-love and longings: between truth and delusion (f.); the proper focus or object of love and longings (g.); and lastly, on longing and prayer (h.). The final subsection will formulate a synthesis of Augustine's doctrine of love in *Trin.* (i.) Because the elements knowledge and love are so closely intertwined, there will be some necessary overlaps in this section with the treatment from the previous sections, on epistemology and the Godhead.

3.iv.b. Augustine's Terminology of 'Love'

The English word 'love' is the translation of Augustine's terms *amor*, *dilectio* and *caritas*. These terms are generally synonymous and used interchangeably by Augustine.¹⁶⁸ In *Civ. Dei* XIV.7, Augustine even explicates that these terms in the Scriptures have synonymous meanings. Van Bavel states on Augustine's doctrine of love: 'Augustine does not make an essential difference between all three Latin words...All three can be good or evil according to the object loved.' Dideberg, in his inventory of these three terms, draws the same conclusions.¹⁶⁹ Yet he notes the fact that there are authors who have made attempts to decipher the differences in these two terms.¹⁷⁰ A citation from *Trin.* VIII.10.14 on the triad of love demonstrates well how the three terms for love are used. This famous passage is an important reference for the upcoming treatment.

*Quid est autem dilectio vel charitas, quam tantopere Scriptura divina laudat et
But what is love or charity, which the Divine Scripture praises and proclaims so highly,*

*praedicat, nisi amor boni? Amor autem alicujus amantis est, et amore aliquid
if not the love of the good? Now love is of someone who loves, and something*

*amatur. Ecce tria sunt; amans, et quod amatur et amor. Quid est ergo amor,
is loved with love. So then there are three: the lover, the beloved and the love. What else*

*nisi quaedum vita duo aliqua copulans, vel copulare appetens, amantem
is love, therefore, except a kind of life which binds or seeks to bind some two together,*

168 Van Bavel, "Love", 509

169 Also D. Dideberg, in: A-L (vol 1: 1986-1994): "Amor", 294-300; 294; "Caritas", 730-743; "Dilectio", 435-453.

170 He notes many authors who have been consulted for this study, such as: Bochet, *Désir Dieu*, 280-281; J. Burnaby, *Amor Dei*, "The Meaning of Love", 83-110. Burnaby's arguments are not philological in character; he is refuting the distinctions which A. Nygren posited between Christian love and Greek *Eros* in: *Agape and Eros*, (London: SPCK, 1953) English translation: A.G. Hebert, (London, 1932), part two: P. S. Watson, 1938-1939. Noteworthy is that Canning's extensive (and classic) study on Augustine (*The Unity of Love*, 1993) does not deal with philological distinctions between Augustine's terms for love either.

*scilicet, et quod **amatur**? Et hoc etiam in externis carnalibusque **amoribus**
namely the lover and the beloved? And this is so even in external and carnal love.*

*ita est: sed et aliquid purius et liquidius hauriamus, calcata carne
But that we may draw from a purer and clearer source, let us tread the flesh*

*ascendamus ad animum. Quid **amat** animus in amico, nisis animum?
underfoot and mount up to the soul. What does the soul love in a friend except the soul?*

*Et illic igitur tria sunt: **amans, et quod amatur, et amor.**
And, therefore, even here there are three: the lover, the beloved and the love. (translation
McKenna)*

Although this is just a sample, there seems to be no significant differences here between the three terms.

3.iv.c. Augustine's Biblical Sources for his Doctrine of Love

Augustine's reflections on human knowledge and knowledge of God in *Trin.* are interwoven into his reflections on love. 'Knowledge of God' -that the image of God will be renewed to the knowledge of God- is an often used quote by Augustine from the letters of Paul. He also leans heavily on Paul's statements concerning love (for example, the definition of love in 1 Cor. 14). His exegesis of 'God is Love' was based on the Epistle of John (1 John 4:16), which also contains poignant passages on loving God and loving one's neighbor, the latter of which is also mentioned in Matt. 22:37-40 and Gal. 5:14. John's epistle also mentions the importance of the knowledge of God.¹⁷¹ Hence, Augustine's treatment of love is often loaded with scriptural passages, as the quote above VIII.10.14 reflects.¹⁷²

3.iv.d. God-Trinity as Love

This subsection contains a synthesis of the sections 2.ii., v. and vi., where the element of love was mentioned. Augustine's discussions of this theme revolved around how love, as a spiritual (immaterial) force, played a role in the human mind with the objective of becoming a more perfect resemblance of God. This began in book VIII with a description of God in a concrete manner in terms of love and good. He stated there that God is love and the source and origin of all human love (section 2.v.' Godhead'). God is invisible Light and Truth; God is 'Good'. This 'Good' served as criteria for our judgment. Hence by turning to God, the human being became good. But first it was of course necessary to understand what 'good' was in order to understand God and in order to obtain knowledge of God –which was crucial for the renewal of the image (VIII.2-6). To understand the good more profoundly, and God as Love and Good, one contemplated both in the eternal Form.¹⁷³ Thus love of God, for Augustine, was the same as loving the eternal principle: the ideal perfect archetype of something.

171 Cf: van Geest explains Augustine's commentary on the Epistle of John, how love plays a role in the moment of knowing God: *Incomprehensibility*, 101-106.

172 Another good example is VIII.7.10.

173 Correspondences in Plotinus are plentiful: e.g.: *Enn.* VI.7.15-17: contemplating the Idea Good makes one good. ('Good' in this context is a Form existing in the *Nous: agathoeidê*); the Intellect received the Ideas which are Good from the One, the Good. (Even though the One is formless.); *Enn.* VI.7.9: 'Why desire the Good? All things desire the Good,...they seek Intellect for their reasoning. But the Good is before Reason (LZ: The One).' Also: VI.7.20.20-25; Desiring the Good (the One) is always for the better.

God as Spirit, Wisdom and Love were expressions from 1 John 4-6, and other bible books, (and are also attributes of the Intellect and One in Plotinian theology). Augustine designated Christ the Son, as the Creator and Form principle, as well as Wisdom, Understanding and Truth. He illuminated the intellect who turned to him. Augustine attributed to the Holy Spirit -the love between God the Father and the Son- divine Love. This was expressed in the following powerful statements. '*So the love which is from God and is God is distinctively the Holy Spirit, through him the charity of God is poured out into our hearts and through it the whole triad* (LZ: *memoria-intellegentia-amor*, the best *imago Trinitatis*) *dwells in us*' (XV.18.32) and '*The love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. (Rom. 5:5)*' (XV.19.37). Augustine's objective in this context was to explain the triads in the inner man of which love and knowledge were the key elements, which reflected in some way the mind, knowledge and love of God. Thus he established the origin of love and knowledge in the *imago Trinitatis* as the Holy Trinity. In Augustine's epistemology, the element love was the driving force behind self-knowledge, acquiring truth and wisdom because it bound the mind to truth. One's love for God was indispensable for knowing God, yet God as Trinity remained incomprehensible, a mystery. On the other hand, Augustine asserted that the mind was capable of coming to a certain conception of the Holy Trinity by loving this mystery.¹⁷⁴

3.iv.e. *Amor in the Image of the Trinity (VIII-X)*

To demonstrate that the Holy Trinity can be reflected in the human spirit, Augustine comments: '*... as a matter of fact, you do see the Trinity, if you see love.*' (McKenna). Augustine sets out to illustrate this with a triad: (*amans-quod amatur-amor*)¹⁷⁵ he who loves (as subject), that what or whom he loves (as object), and love itself as the binding factor between the two. As such, this triad reflects the procession of the Holy Trinity (VIII.8.12 and 10.14 in the quote above). This 'trinity of love' is Augustine's first triad in the mind and serves as a departure point for his further exploration of the trinities which qualify as 'images of the Holy Trinity'.¹⁷⁶ Augustine then ponders, what do we know about true love anyway? (VIII.7.10, 8-12) His answer seems simple: love entails everything that one loves. Yet what he means is, is that semantically one cannot love or know love unless one is involved in the act of loving. Love must have an object in order to be what it is. Thus the meaning of the term love encompasses in itself a dynamic movement which expands from the one who loves to another and

174 These last two sentences are expressed more explicitly in other works. We could deduce the same from *Trin.* VI.10.12; XV.14.24, 27.49-50 and 28.51. God remains inaccessible even by love in the same way he is ultimately inaccessible by knowledge (*Ep. Johannes ad Parthom* 6.2, 6.3, 4.9, 8.6, 8.8). As such, the *via negativa* makes up a part of the *via amoris*. Cf: van Geest, *Incomprehensibility*, 101-106, 170-171.

175 Plotinus mentions this triad in *Enn.* VI.8.15; also that *Eros* is an intermediary between the lover and the beloved (VI.7.33.24-30). He also asserts that longings conceive thinking (V.6.5).

176 My view contrasts that of Brachtendorf (*Struktur*, 126), who states that Augustine's intention of introducing this triad of love in book VII, is not to consider it as an analogy of the divine Trinity, but instead to utilize it in book IX, where he reduces the triad to a dyad in the special case of self-love, in which subject and object are one. As such, Brachtendorf undermines the importance of this triad. Augustine's initial triad of love occurring in the intellect forms the basis of his subsequent triads, as it perfectly coincides with the procession of the Holy Trinity. It also demonstrates Augustine's anchoring of love throughout his whole elaboration of the doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis*, elevating it to the most important element. Without a conscious love or desire for knowledge, knowledge in mankind would not progress. C. Tornau gives another explanation than Brachtendorf as to why Augustine cuts off his development of the triad of love in *Trin.* VIII and proceeds to the triad *mens-notitia-amor* in *Trin.* X. It is because Augustine was aware of this triad in Plotinus *Enn.* VI.8.15.1, concerning the unitarian love in the One, and wished to avoid dealing with the philosophical consequences of positing a self-referencing transcendent love. Tornau's argument is in my opinion not sufficiently worked out. Because if he had looked deeper into Augustine's doctrine of the divine Trinity, he would have discovered that we could safely conclude that Augustine posited the Holy Trinity as a (self-referencing transcendent) Trinity of love, which like Plotinus' One is incomprehensible to the human mind. See my analysis in Chapter VI.2.vi. and VI.4.iii.b. C. Tornau, "Eros versus Agape? Von Plotins Eros zum Liebesbegriff Augustins" in: *Philosophisches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft* 112 (2005), 271-291, 288-299.

perpetuated further. Augustine then makes a statement which has provoked much discussion: one's love for another is exactly the same as loving God because God is the source of all love (VIII.8.12).¹⁷⁷ Subsequently Augustine invents a new triad: I, as the lover, my neighbor as the other, and God. In both triads God or love itself is the binding or unifying principle. Note that this is the beginning of his reflections on the two first commandments to love God and to love one's neighbor as oneself. This theme is elaborated in various contexts in *Trin.* and is thus one of his key doctrinal aspects of love. What we love in others is their good and just character. The reason why one loves something or someone is because the good trait of that person complies with the highest norm, the Idea, such as in 'You only love what is good.'¹⁷⁸ How we ourselves become good and just is by contemplating and loving the Forms. Likewise, one loves the person whom one believes to be just, because this person loves the Form Justice by having perceived and understood it himself (VIII.6.9). Truly loving someone means loving this person's spirit (VIII.10.14),¹⁷⁹ another statement which has provoked animosity in some readers.¹⁸⁰

Then he provides a definition of the element love on the human level (VIII.10.14: see the quote in subsection iv.b).¹⁸¹ Here, recognizing that love is a kind of 'life', he is referring to the being, essence or substance which love as well as knowledge constitutes. He then proceeds to explain how love, in desiring self-knowledge, leads to acquiring knowledge and then connects the mind to understanding. Thereby Augustine constructs (in his opinion), a better trinity in which the element *amor* binds *notitia* with the *mens*. Having introduced in VIII the themes of knowledge and self-knowledge, he now shows how love (and self-love) play an instrumental role in acquiring knowledge of God. In doing so, he is still looking for adequate answers to his question:¹⁸² how can we love or know God even if he is not fully known to us? He explains that in order to learn anything,¹⁸³ one must feel a love or desire for that something which one does not yet fully know (X.1.3).¹⁸⁴ Self-love is instigated by a longing for self-knowledge and vice-versa. The mind can only know itself if it loves itself. Only by recognizing self-love or love in one's mind, one can understand one's mind and then love something else or another person. As we recall from section 3, Augustine's reflections on the relationship between the three elements spilled out in all directions. The two elements, knowledge and love, formed a special relationship together with mind: they enabled the mind to be reflexive and aware of itself.

177 Teske, "Love of Neighbor in Augustine"; R. Canning, *The Unity of Love for God and Neighbor in St. Augustine*, (Louvain: Augustinian Historical Institute, 1993); Augustine expresses in other works that love for God is the first in the order of commandments but love for people near me is the first in the order in the carrying that commandment out. Loving others is enough because this love encompasses love for God and is a gift from God. Yet in *Trin.*, Augustine stresses the necessity and importance that a person love God first before all others, which will in turn effectuate the proper love of others (e.g.: *Sermo* 1, *Ep. John* 8.4); van Bavel, *Augustinus*, 459; *ibid*, "Love" in: *AttA*; *ibid*, "Double Face of Love".

178 VIII.3.4. In VIII.9.13, he uses the example of Paul as a servant of God and how our visualization of such is in compliance with the ideal Form, "Servant of God."

179 This recalls Plotinus, who posits that pure true love is exclusively unphysical as well. Regarding lovers who aim for sexual intercourse, he claims that earthly beauty satisfies them. He means here that those seeking physical love do not recollect the archetypes of Beauty (*Enn.* III.5.1.20-43).

180 Augustine has been criticized severely for this aspect of his doctrine of love. Van Bavel discusses the many outraged responses in: *Christians in the World: Introduction to the Spirituality of St. Augustine*, (New York 1980,) translated from Dutch: *Van Liefde en Vriendschap*, (Kampen: Kok Agora, 1986), 76.

181 This recalls Plotinus' notion of *Eros*: longings which never stop, desiring to go further than the One (*Enn.* VI.7.22.20).

182 i.e.: VII.4.6, 5.8 and X.1.1, etc.

183 Torchia explains the difference between Augustine's love of study (*amor studii*) and inquisitive appetite (*appetitus inveniendi*): 'While the former encompasses a sound devotion to learning that ultimately leads the mind to the contemplation of God and eternal truths, the latter is the hallmark of mind's lower function when given free unregulated rein over our range of affections. ...Augustine acknowledges a fundamental difference between the inquisitive appetite and the mind's natural love for its object of knowledge...he treats inquisitiveness as the desire to find out and the desire to know as correlative.' (Torchia, *Curiositas*, 178-179).

184 See Plotinus' on the unconscious soul becoming conscious (*Enn.* VI.7.15-25).

Love played a role in determining truth. Love involved an inner appreciation, intuition, approbation or confirmation that a particular knowledge was true and conformed to what one knows in one's own mind to be true.¹⁸⁵ In this sense, love embraced truth. Earlier Augustine deemed the three elements as substances, but now the unity of the three elements formed by this intense collaboration, he asserts, constitutes one essence and as such images the Holy Trinity (IX.12.18).

3.iv.f. Love-Longing-Searching (and Synthesis)

The conclusion of book IX.12.18, the passages referred to above, is of interest here because Augustine is associating love with desire (*appetitus*), desire to know (*inquisitio*), will (*voluntas*) and searching (*quaerere*), as binding forces between the mind and knowledge.

*What then, are we to say about love (de amore)? When the mind loves itself, does it not also seem to have begotten the love of itself? For it was lovable to itself even before it loved itself...Is it, perhaps, to indicate clearly that this is the principle of love from which it proceeds -...but that it is, therefore, not rightly said to be begotten by the mind, as is the knowledge of itself by which it knows itself, because that has already been found through knowledge which is called born or discovered (inventum) and is usually preceded by a search inquisition which will come to rest in knowledge as its goal? For inquiry is a desire to find (nam inquisition est appetitus inveniendi) which is the same thing as saying, to discover....Further that desire, which is latent in seeking, proceeds from one who seeks, remains as it were in suspense and only comes to rest in the goal towards which it is directed, when that which is sought has been found and is united with him who seeks. Although this desire (appetitus), that is, this seeking (inquisitio) does not seem to be love, by which that which is known is loved, for we are still striving to know, yet it is something of the same kind. For it can already be called "will" (voluntas) since everyone who seeks wishes to find (quaerit invenire); and if what he seeks belongs to the order of knowledge, then everyone who seeks wishes to know (omnis qui quaerit nosse vult). And if he wishes ardently and earnestly, he is said to study, a term we generally use for those who pursue and acquire any branch of learning. **A kind of desire (appetitus), therefore, precedes the birth in the mind and by means of it, that is, by our seeking and finding what we wish to know, an offspring, namely knowledge is born.....and this same desire by which one yearns for the knowing of the thing when known, while it holds and embraces the beloved offspring, that is, knowledge and unites it to its begetter.**' (IX.12.18) (McKenna)*

Inquisition ('searching and finding'), appetite and desire are also what trigger 'the birth of knowledge' in the mind. They hold and embrace the offspring, uniting it with the begetter, the *mens*. In this way, they are synonymous with the element love. Longing to know something (*scire cupientium*), Augustine repeats in X.1.2., is not without love for the thing one longs to know. This love and desire are driven by the perception of beauty. When something has been learned which is considered worthwhile, it will be retained because one sees the beauty in it and also its utility. The beauty of the thing is truly known in the eternal principles, which encompass the knowledge of all signs; this is the beauty which one truly loves.¹⁸⁶ Hence, longing for knowledge and longing for beauty are essentially the same for Augustine.

185 *Trin.* VIII.6.9 and IX.10.15; This recalls Plotinus' mentioning of the approbation or judgment of Good or Truth, the latter of which is the soul's desire and love (*Enn.* VI.7.20-22).

186 These passages reflect Augustine's familiarity with *Enn.* V.8. *On Intelligible Beauty* and V.3.5: dealing with desiring transcendent beauty and knowledge.

Let us now make a succinct synthesis, highlighting the aspects of love (desire, searching, *etc.*) and tying them in with certain facets of self-knowledge from section 3.iii.d. We will begin when Augustine turned to the question: what is the mind searching for when it is passionately searching to know itself, as long as it is for himself unknown? (X.3.5, 6.8) He explained that our self-knowledge was often false, by having loved material images and attaching ourselves to them. This was also the way in which we are accustomed to thinking that we know God –by imagining God with material images, which was likewise faulty (I.6.11, *etc.*) In spite of this, one must keep longing for truth and not cease to search because one will indeed eventually find it.¹⁸⁷ In this sense, knowing that one does not know was also a form of self-knowledge (likened to the adage of Socrates). This entailed knowledge of the fact that I am a seeker of self-knowledge and am without a certain knowledge (and this is why I long for it). The intellect had no need to search for itself in order to know itself (X.10.11) because the mind finds itself by merely entering itself, without having first to wade through external, visual images.¹⁸⁸ Augustine was referring here to the higher form of self-knowledge *se nosse* which pertained to the intellect-image of God. In this sense, *se nosse* constituted a *verbum*, in which self-love approbated this to be true and held it fast.

Hence, Augustine's doctrine of love stresses that longing to know will ultimately lead to truth: of oneself and of God. It will lead to gazing at the Ideas and embracing the truth, which occurs as an immediate intuition (*visio intellectualis*). One loves God by loving the Ideas (in this sense also 'Ideals'). Loving in this way is always active, always searching, always desiring to fathom more of the incomprehensibility of God. As such, love and desire elevates one's consciousness from an individual *verbum*, to the universality of knowledge and to divine Truth, Wisdom and Love of Christ, the *Verbum Dei*. Augustine's view on the personal development of self-knowledge and knowledge of God in their relation to loving, desiring and searching for truth can be summarized in the potent quote below. Here we can confirm the primacy of love in Augustine's doctrine of intellect.

*A trinity is certainly what we are **looking for** (LZ: in one's mind) and not any kind of trinity but the one that God is, the true and supreme and only God. Wait for it then, whoever you are listening to this, we are still looking and not one can fairly find fault with someone who is **looking for** such things as this, provided that in **looking for something so difficult either to know or to express**, he remains absolutely firm in **faith**..."**Look for God**", it says, (Ps. 105:40) "**and your souls shall live**"; and in case anyone should be too quick to congratulate himself that he has finally gotten there, "**look for his face**", it (LZ: the search) goes on, "**always**". ... Perfection in this life, he (LZ: Paul in Phil 3:13) is saying, is **nothing but forgetting what lies behind and stretching out to what lies ahead intently**. (IX.1.1).¹⁸⁹*

3.iv.g. Self-Love and Longings: Truth and Delusion

There are longings, such as longing for knowledge of self or of God, which ultimately lead to happiness;¹⁹⁰ while other longings lead to despair. Augustine's psychology distinguishes knowledge and love directed towards material existence from the knowledge and love active in the *imago Dei*

187 *i.e.*: IX.1.1; XV.2.2 and 28.51.

188 He compares this to true love which cannot be true if derived from need. An interesting parallel with Plotinus: the notion of *Eros* is considered non-appetitive. J. Rist, *Eros and Psyche Studies in Plato, Plotinus and Origen*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1967) 183, 76-86.

189 Plotinus often expressed the importance of forgetting (a multitude of things from this life) in order to remember God, one's true self and one's origin—one's destiny (*e.g.*: *Enn.* IV.3.25, 26.53-57 and 27.21-26) .

190 I. Bochet, *Désir, Dieux*.

-that which is oriented to God and is essentially sinless (see the characteristics of *visio intellectualis* Chapter IV.4.iii.c). The acquisition of self-knowledge or self-love however can have pitfalls. '*For it (the self) does many things through evil desires as though it had forgotten itself.*' (X.5.7). He gives the example of the mind (*imago Dei*) seeing inwardly beautiful things in the elevated nature of God which inspire love. But instead of remaining focused on those things to enjoy them, a person could prefer to attribute those things to himself: to become what God is by his own willpower instead of longing to resemble God by the grace of God (X.5.7).¹⁹¹ This is illustrated in this example: '*What happens is that the soul, loving its own power, slides away from the whole which is common to all and into the part which is its own private property...by the apostasy of pride which is called the beginning of all sin, it strives to grab something more than the whole. And to govern by its own laws.*' (XII.9.14).

Hence, self-love can hold a person in delusion. It begins with loving material images in the outer world which only contain truth in so far as they are vestiges or traces of divine truth. A person's thoughts are ordinarily permeated with these images. The force of love for these *phantasiae* and *phantasmata* can be great; in cherishing them and pinning them to the memory with loving care, the mind attributes to them something of its own substance (X.6.8). The false self-image which results, leads to the fundamentally incorrect belief that one's true self is that which is bound to its material life (X.7.9).

Augustine describes another possible pitfall.¹⁹² Material knowledge, not of a permanent character, can be lost, forgotten. Realizing this, a person might strive to constrain the potential loss of knowledge, because should this happen, he would think that he would lose all security and think of himself as less. Thus by pursuing worldly knowledge, this person deludes himself into thinking he cannot lose himself. Yet in attaching oneself to the external images, one becomes connected to changeability and instability. This pursuit entails turning away from God; the person becomes less and less even though he assumes that he is becoming more and more (X.5.7).¹⁹³ Material images cannot be brought inside in the domain of the immaterial *imago Dei*, because, Augustine argues, they are pollution (X.8.11). Love for worldly knowledge is a love for something foreign to one true self: alien additions which fog up the view of true reality.¹⁹⁴ A true self-image is created by identifying ourselves with the truth -the higher *verba*- which pertain to the domain of the intellect. These statements can be compared rather neatly to Plotinus' statement on the *Nous*, whose domain contains no discursive thought (for example in *Enn.* IV.4.1.15); thus no external, transient or mutable images, as they cannot concur with the perfect unity of the Intellect, its union with self-knowledge and its pure immaterial intelligibility. The image-intellect actualizes itself by imitating the divine *Nous*. In both Augustine and Plotinus, understanding true reality augments one's comprehension of oneself and the world in which one lives. Pursuing worldly knowledge is in itself essentially unproblematic as long as one keeps one's origin and destiny in mind. Augustine stresses however that one's self-love must have limitations. For the element self-knowledge, Augustine applied a shift of focus: from self-knowledge to universal knowledge of all humanity. He attributed a shift to love as well: in contemplating God, one's self-love becomes in this sense 'our' love -love for one another, loving one's neighbor.

191 A clear critique of Platonists as in *Conf.* VII.17, 20-26.

192 See Canning, *Love for God and Neighbor*, 116-141, for a more expansive treatment of Augustine's view on the pitfalls of self-love. / '*The more we love God the more we love ourselves.*' *Trin.* XII.16-the interpretation of this statement has led to debate: Canning deals with the views of O'Donovan, Nygren and Burnaby, 121-122; Burnaby, *Amor Dei*, 116-126; O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine* (New Haven: Yale, 1980).

193 This recalls Plotinus: *Enn.* IV.3.27.12. Here he describes how souls gravitate towards physical embodiment, entranced by the possibilities for actualization of their powers. Cf. Torchia, *Curiositas*, 182.

194 Recalls Plotinus (*Enn.* IV.3.27).

3.iv.h. Love, Longings and Prayer as Related to the Doctrine of the *Imago Trinitatis*

Prayer makes up an important element in Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* as exemplified by the prayer at the conclusion of *Trin.* (XV.28.51). This 'Prayer to the Holy Trinity'¹⁹⁵ is literally Augustine's final words in the work and forms a stark contrast to the highly analytical and dogmatic character in the rest of *Trin.* He is addressing God directly here, as he does in *Conf.*, a work which can be regarded as one long, extended prayer.¹⁹⁶

Augustine's teaching on prayer in his other works is anchored in the themes of longing for and the love of God.¹⁹⁷ Longings are expressed and ultimately fulfilled by praying and turning to the source of all love. Thus the core message of Augustine's mystagogy of prayer is that prayer is an act of desire¹⁹⁸ as well as an act of love.¹⁹⁹ Augustine's assertions here can easily be applied to his doctrine of love in *Trin.*: such as, that prayer is a means of connecting the lover with the beloved, the lover of wisdom or truth to the source of love and truth. In this sense, longing and prayer are one and the same, '*longing is always praying*'.²⁰⁰ Prayer can also include 'sacred longings', such as Augustine's longings we have encountered in *Trin.*: to comprehend the Holy Trinity,²⁰¹ for the perfection of one's imaging of it, to be liberated from life's falsehoods, for the blessed vision of God, for the union of love with God, etc.. In the 'Prayer to the Trinity', Augustine pleads to God to keep him always searching and desiring God. The continuous 'finding of God' has to do with the increasing awareness of God's love and presence, which augments one's self-knowledge and renews one's image. Prayer, which intensifies longing and loving, forms as such a bridge between this temporal, broken life and the beatitude of the afterlife.

In expressing these desires at the end of *Trin.*, he fuses his doctrine of prayer with the consciousness associated with the *imago Trinitatis*: a state of mind above ordinary consciousness (*se nosse, ratio superior* and *sapientia*), directed to God above it in compliance with his condition of the ultimately correct object of the gaze.²⁰² In this sense we can say that Augustine's 'Prayer to the Holy Trinity' is a demonstration of the soul's proper focus. Augustine's notion of the trinitarian intellect can be aligned to this prayer or generally to Augustine's doctrine of prayer (from his other works) in a number of other ways, and especially seen from the perspective of contemplation and obtaining knowledge. Before responding to a difficult inquiry in *Gen. litt* and *Trin.*, he prayed briefly to God so that he may be shown how to understand.²⁰³ Augustine seems to intend that praying is a means to expand the temporal understanding of the finite human mind and deepen one's conception of God. It is an activity which creates an opening or receptivity in one's mind for the invisible, the immutable, the eternal and immortal.²⁰⁴ Turning to God in prayer is essentially a *conversio*, as he explained in

195 See Zwollo, "Prayer, Desire and the Image of God: Augustine's Longing for God in his 'Prayer to the Holy Trinity'", *LAHR*, forthcoming. I have been unable to locate literature dealing specifically with this prayer and treating its meaning. Exceptions: Schindler, *Wort und Analogie*, 244-245; van Geest, *Incomprehensibility*, 153-155; yet these consist of only brief comments.

196 It is also the only complete prayer in *Trin.* There are other prayers here (e.g.: IV.1.1 and V.1.1) yet these are mainly short and fleeting.

197 *Enn. Ps.* 39.14; I. Bochet, *Désir Dieu*, 143-165, 462; T.J. van Bavel, *The Longing of the Heart, Augustine's Doctrine of Prayer* (Louvain: Peeters, 2009) 45-58; *ibid.*, "Love", *AttA*, 509-516.

198 *Epistula* 130. In this lengthy correspondence addressed to Proba, Augustine explains how one ought to pray and distinctly connects praying with desiring. He encourages Proba to pray and desire without ceasing (130.9.8 and 10.19).

199 *Conf.* V.1.1; Van Bavel, *Longing Heart*, 73; P.J.J. van Geest, "Transformation in Order and Desire. Thomas a Kempis' Indebtedness to St. Augustine" in: *Religious Identity and the Problem of Historical Foundation*, (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 438-456.

200 *Desiderium orat semper. Enn. Ps.* 37, 14; *Sermo* 80.7.

201 *Trin.* IV.21.31.

202 See Zwollo, "Prayer" forthcoming.

203 *Trin.* VIII.1.1-2; IV.1.1 and IV.21.31. He began his exegesis of Genesis in this way as well in *Conf.* XI.1-9.

204 *Trin.* XV.28.51-in the prayer itself; VIII.1.1-2; *Ep.* 130.

his interpretation of Gen. 1:26 in *Gen. litt.*, III.20.30. Conversion involved the effective functioning of the human will as it ideally functions, by directing one's gaze and desires upwards. The multifarious images from the exterior world, which are ever present in our thoughts, serve as a distraction to intellectual contemplation and communion with God. Prayer is thus a temporal means to approach the purity, singularity and unity which characterizes God as a Trinity. By inference we can assume that for Augustine, contemplative prayer involves an intellectual vision of some degree. The intellect, striving to attain the best state of consciousness, is motivated by loving, searching and longing for what one truly loves, and therefore finds fulfillment in this life by praying.

3.iv.i. Synthesis: Augustine's Doctrine of Love in *Trin.*

Regarding the subject of self-love: O'Donovan describes Augustine's conception, summarizing the general differences between love and will in this way: '*Psychological self-love is the operation of the will in holding the concept of self before the self-perceiving mind. It is not the occupation of the will with its ultimate term, it therefore has nothing to do with the teleological thrust of the will towards beatitude.*'²⁰⁵ O'Donovan's first claim is true. In the second he misses the point in *Trin.* Will and self-love are not so separate as Donovan is making them to be here, particularly in the teleological thrust towards beatitude. *Voluntas* in collaboration with the element knowledge (*notitia, intelligentia*) in the *imago Trinitatis*, is not necessarily a separate faculty of the mind. It coincides with love and desire in conscious willingness and purposefulness, in the simple wanting of something and focusing on it. The thrust of human desire itself will eventually spur the soul onward to the love of its origin. O'Donovan summarizes Augustine's conception further: '*Self-love is articulated in two kinds: the self-love of the imago deformata and the self-love of the trinity of contemplation. The role of faith in marking and bridging the chasm between the natural and the perfect has its implications for every activity of the mind and so the mind's self-love too, must be seen as natural on the one hand, perfected on the other and the two aspects are not to be confused.*'

O'Donovan is correct in his differentiation of kinds of self-love; the lower one embraces the exterior world in some way, the higher takes place in the activity of contemplation pertaining to the *imago Trinitatis*. However, O'Donovan's claim that '*the two aspects are not to be confused*' is not entirely accurate. Once again, his differentiation is too pronounced and inapplicable to Augustine's treatment in *Trin.* There, both forms of self-love can indeed be differentiated, in a similar way as Augustine differentiated two kinds of self-knowledge, the various kinds of *verba* and two kinds of wisdom: *scientia* and *sapientia*. Yet the two forms of self-love are closely connected in Augustine's thinking. In his examples of the pitfalls with self-love (point iv.g.), he accounts for natural human mental activities. He shows that these are in the long run generally instable. However it is only when self-love goes overboard that it becomes unnatural and sinful: hazardous to oneself or to others; for instance, in self-aggrandizement and amassing unduly power and status. The perfection of self-love is realized by personal development, starting from one's natural egotistic tendencies, gradually reducing the hazards and moving towards altruistic charity and a progressive assimilation of the perfect love for God. This kind of self-love finds its expression in love for others. Furthermore, the good, healthy functioning will pertains to the domain of the *imago Dei*, in which a person assents to act in the name of the general good and out of love received by God.²⁰⁶ Christ's grace, says Augustine,

205 O. O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine*, 90. O'Donovan says also (on p. 91) '*Augustine did not speak of outgrowing self-love.*' This claim is however debatable and requires further nuances.

206 *Trin.* XII.9.14.-10.15.-11.16; Van Bavel, *Vriendschap*, 79; This also recalls the universality of Plotinus' human *nous* as a 'we' instead of an 'I' (throughout the *Enneads*).

is necessary to heal the weaknesses of the will and egoism in order to change its orientation. Considering Augustine's view of the life-long formation of humans in *Gen. litt* III.20-30-31 to the state of perfection of the angels which he reiterates in *Trin.*, we could then infer that he means that one assimilates the traits of the good will, given by God, which will then become therefore 'natural' and eventually perfected. Hence, a human being possesses both Donovan's types of natural and perfected self-love at the same time, each individual in various gradations. In this life, the will is never completely healed in one final flash.

Augustine considered the desire of what one loves and love itself as extensions of one another. Desire was essentially longing for something which is absent; and love, he defined, as a 'life' which united two things or desired to unite them, as in the lover with the beloved. Human love and longings were gifts from God.²⁰⁷ These two activities of the human psyche represented for Augustine the most important forces behind all human activity²⁰⁸ as well as the compelling force behind all spiritual development and fulfillment.²⁰⁹ Love played a large role in Augustine's epistemology, in the search and desire for knowledge which one did not yet possess. Whether it was material knowledge or true knowledge, it was love which gave its assent to truth. Yet love for truth could not rest at worldly knowledge, as the soul was attracted to immutable, divine knowledge from its Creator which would ultimately renew and complete its resemblance to Him. In Augustine's theory of knowledge, one's ability to grasp itself or God in a discursive manner was limited. In order to fill in for the lack of conscious concrete knowledge, Augustine fused into his epistemology the element of faith. He considered this as a kind of *scientia* which would be replaced by *sapientia* in the intellectual vision or the *imago Trinitatis*. Augustine often quoted Paul's words in *Trin.* that without love your talents, your faith, your knowledge was nothing.²¹⁰ From this we can assume that Augustine too believed that without love there would be no (self-) knowledge, no awareness thus no upward progression towards God. Contemplating or praying were excellent ways to lift one's focus to God, but the activity of love and desire were more powerful. They were more effective because they worked faster than discursive thinking and also coincided with the immediate intuitive grasp of truth of intellectual vision. Love and intellectual vision thus operated in unity. The soul, in intellectual vision, desired God and loved his wisdom. We can infer here that in Augustine's view, love became most potent at the actualization of one's intellect. In intellectual vision, the cycle of love was complete. Radiating from God through the creation act, sent down to human existence by the Holy Spirit and the Son, then through the conscious activity of human beings' expanding love and cultivation of contemplation and intellectual vision, love returned back to God. In this way, the second and third Trinitarian entities designated as divine Wisdom and Love were dynamically present in the human image-intellect.

207 *Trin.* VIII.10.14, XV.26.45

208 *Trin.* XII.14.22

209 See note 164. See also: van Geest, *Incomprehensibility*, 171. Van Geest explains that these conclusions brought Augustine to assert the possibility of developing a love for someone who could not be seen, to whose image humans were created. This love was the most important subject of reflection as regards knowing the Holy Trinity. When a person loved a certain subject, then the highest form of knowledge would be reached.

Van Geest further asserts '...Augustine finds the reflection on love less important for approaching God than one's acts of love, in which are motivated by love.' (My translation of the Dutch p.174). Van Geest does not give a reference here where Augustine expressed this in *Trin.* VII. In my reading of *Trin.*, Augustine intended to say that the reflection on one's self-love in consideration of God's love, already counted as an approach towards God. The will here was not functioning in its brokenness, it entailed a certain union with God, a short but strong immaterial vision of God which boosted one's self-love and thus love for others and as such brought one to acts of love. Augustine tended to make God's love seem unconscious: as if we were not always aware that God's love was the origin of our own love. Thus reflecting upon one's source, cleared up the material images from the mind and allowed the soul to enjoy God, thus enjoy loving.

210 *Trin.* XV.18.32 or 19.37; 1 Cor. 13:1-3.

4. Augustine's Account of the Ascent in *Trin.*

4.i. Introduction

In Chapter IV.4.iv., we acknowledged that the ascent to God in light of Augustine's depiction in *Gen. litt* was an automatic factor incorporated into Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Dei* and intellect. As a whole his doctrine consisted of the development of one's intellect, an orientation to God, a progressive approaching and assimilation of divine knowledge in order to increase one's resemblance to God. It entailed as well intellectual vision, a certain kind of vision of God. Let us now briefly review a few of Augustine's general statements on the ascent thus far in this study. In *Gen. litt* and *Conf.*, he emphasized the difficulties of keeping focused on the divine and illustrated the problem of the soul being weighed down by material concerns. The defective will was one of the problems he stressed in *Conf.* which required healing by Christ and his grace, in order to remain focused on God. The cause of the weak will was original sin, the effects of which he explained more fully in *Gen. litt* in his exegesis of the story of Adam and Eve.

In *Gen. litt*, Augustine also depicted an epistemological elevation of the mind which he expounded through his theory of three visions: *visio intellectualis* being the highest, superior to *visio spiritualis*, which in turn was superior to *visio corporalis*. His conception of intellectual vision served to delineate the characteristics of the image-intellect and its natural propensity for contemplation for what is above it: the Ideas in the Creator, the *Verbum Dei*. Intellectual vision was basically a higher consciousness than ordinary, daily consciousness; an immediate and intuitive grasp of universal truth, infallible and thus sinless. It also entailed the good functioning of the will.

Compared to his accounts of the ascent in *Gen. litt* and *Conf.*,²¹¹ Augustine's account of the ascent to God in *Trin.* runs basically along the same lines. It is more thorough and the step-by-step process is analyzed more carefully. Many new elements are added, most importantly, the element love, as well as faith and the development of the intellect-image through spiritual exercises and prayer. He augments as well his list of aspects in human life which block the ascent to God. For example, his emphasis on Paul's statements in 1 Cor. 13:2, that in this life we can only perceive God through a dark mirror and through enigmas; and the effects of sin, improper desires and love. *Trin.* VIII-X illustrate an ascent in self-knowledge and love; books XI-XIII highlight the specific details of an epistemology, from the experience of sense perception to that of the immaterial world of the intellect and of the divine Trinity. As F. van Fleteren correctly points out, it is highly likely that Augustine intended *Trin.* to explicate more fully his own experiences of God and to give a more complete response to the question: to what degree can a human mind know God in this life?²¹²

Augustine expresses the ascent in optimistic terms of uniting with God, as well as in negative ones in *Trin.*, similar to those mentioned above in *Conf.* VII and IX. Many researchers, especially of *Conf.*

211 As studied in Chapters IV.4: in e.g.: *De Ideis*, *Gen. litt* XII.26.54; and Chapter II.1.ii.c. and e.: in i.e: *Conf.* VII.10.16-12.18.

212 Van Fleteren's remarks on *Trin.*: 'Augustine's purpose in writing the *Trinity* is to ascertain what knowledge of God that man can have in this life. In 394 or thereabouts, Augustine finally disavowed his earlier notion that the human mind could attain a full knowledge of and vision of God in this life...He was still left with the question: To what degree can the human mind know God in this life. In my opinion, Augustine began to write the *Trinitate* as his final answer to that question, which had vexed him since his reading of the Neoplatonists in 386. It is even possible that Augustine's review of these experiences of the divine in writing the *Conf.* prompted him to begin with the writing the *Trinitate*.' 'Mysticism in the *Confessiones*. A Controversy Revisited" in: F. van Fleteren, J. C. Schnaubelt, J. Reino (eds.) *Collectanea Augustiniana Augustine: Mystic and Mystagogue*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 318-319.

and *Trin.*, assert that Augustine portrays his Platonist ascents as a ‘failure’.²¹³ This is peculiar because Augustine does not use the term failure anywhere. He indeed highlights the difficulties of the ascent in *Conf.* and he repeats these with verve in *Trin.* Augustine indeed posits that no one is able to remain focused on God as a result of Adam’s original sin. Yet alongside this he also posits that this sin can be alleviated in a gradual process by turning to the second Adam, Christ, who heals the infirmities of the soul in order to facilitate intellectual vision and the glimpse of God. Augustine shows in *Trin.* that it is the destiny of a every Christian to rise above sin and the ways of the world which we inherited, but we cannot do this without Christ’s grace. Therefore, while reading the passages on the difficulties of the soul, one must keep in mind the many passages elsewhere in which he affirmatively states the possibility of uniting with God. An interesting note of comparison here: as mentioned in Chapter III.3.vi., in Plotinus’ doctrine of the human intellect, its divinity is so emphasized that other facets of his doctrine explicating the difficulties of the soul which prevent union with the divine, -which are sometimes explained in other treatises-, can be overlooked. As I argued in that chapter, it is important that researchers take account of both aspects of his doctrine. The opposite situation is in operation with Augustine: some researchers tend to focus on Augustine’s pessimistic claims and lose sight of his optimistic ones.

In this section, various aspects of Augustine’s accounts of the ascent from *Trin.* will be reviewed: from his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* (ii.a.); of the epistemological ascent (ii.b.) and then the ascent seen from the perspective of love (ii.c.). Other important topics concerning the ascent will then be highlighted: Augustine’s position on the intelligibility as well as the incomprehensibility of God (ii.d.). Subsection iii.a. will respond to the question: what is Augustine’s stance in *Trin.* as to how far a soul can unite with God? This will involve a synthesis of earlier treated material in this section, including details from his eschatology; and lastly, my conclusions regarding Augustine’s account of the ascent in *Trin.*(iii.b.).

4.ii. Summaries of the Ascent

4.ii.a. *Imago Trinitatis* as Reflection of the Holy Trinity

The following passage summarizes Augustine’s treatment of the *imago Trinitatis* and the trinities in inner man most adequately:

As far as we could, we have also used the creation which God made to remind those who ask for reasons in such matters that as far as they can, they should decry his invisible things by understanding them through the things that are made, and especially through the rational or intellectual creature which is made to the image of God; so that through this, as a kind of mirror, as far as they can and if they can, they might perceive in our memory, understanding and will that God is a trinity. Anyone who has a lively intuition of these three (as divinely established in the nature of his mind) and of how great a thing it is that his mind has that by which even the eternal and unchanging nature can be recalled, beheld and desired-it is recalled by memory, beheld by intelligence, embraced by love-has thereby found the image of that supreme trinity, in order to recollect it, see it and enjoy it, he should refer to every ounce and particle of his life.

213 J. Cavadini, “Structure, Intention”; J.P. Kenny, “Faith and Reason”, CCA 2014, 275-291, 290; L. Ayres, “Augustine on the trine life of God” in CCA 2014, 60-80; Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 79; In “Christological Context”, Ayres nuances Cavadini’s bolder statements on the ‘failure’ and in doing so, he nuances his own assertions as well (117-121); also in: “The Discipline of Self-Knowledge” (269, note 26). Lagouanère argues against du Roy’s claim that Augustine’s methodical analogy in *Trin.* is an *echec* (*Intériorité*, 503); O. du Roy, *Intelligence de la Foi en la Trinité selon Saint Augustine, Genèse de sa théologie trinitaire jusqu’en 391* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1966).

*But I have sufficiently warned him, so it seems to me, that this image made by the trinity and altered for worse by its own fault, is not so to be compared to the trinity that it is reckoned similar in every respect. Rather he should note **how great the dissimilarity is in whatever the similarity there may be.*** (XV.20.39)

Augustine established that the two elements -knowledge and love-, collaborating in unity, formed in this higher consciousness a triad: a trinity of mind (self-awareness), knowledge and love (=mens, notitia, amor). He wished to demonstrate how this human mental trinity reflected the Holy Trinity, the latter of which we should be able to see in our own minds. The difficulty entailed that this reflection was imperfect and inferior to that what it imaged. The intellect could perceive this imaging to some degree in the procession of the three divine Persons: God the Father brings forth God the Son; their mutual love produces the Holy Spirit. Corresponding to this procession, the human mind brought forth a certain knowledge which was bound to itself by its own love. Hence, in order to elucidate how the human trinity could increase its resemblance to the Holy Trinity, Augustine refined his terminology from 'mind-knowledge-love' to the trinity of: 'remembering-understanding-loving' (*memoria-intellegentia-amor/voluntas*) (*Trin.* IX-X). This intellectual trinity, in the first place, reflected upon itself, its own mind and subsequently brought forth knowledge-self-knowledge (as in 'understanding oneself'). Knowledge was bound to the mind through the third element, love-as in loving oneself and loving (or approving of) one's knowledge of oneself.²¹⁴ In effect, this triad formed an analogy to the Holy Trinitarian procession.

In reference to the 'dissimilarity' in the quote above, there is yet another analogy which expresses the relationship between the human and the Holy Trinity more accurately. The element human mind reflects God the Father when depicted as 'Divine Memory, Mind or Self-Consciousness'; self-knowledge reflects God the Son as ultimate 'Knowledge, Wisdom, Truth or Understanding'; and self-love reflects the Holy Spirit as 'Divine Love or Will'.²¹⁵ Augustine distinguished between the human trinity and the Holy Trinity in that when these terms or characteristics were applied to the three divine Persons, they all apply to them equally. In other words, there is no separation between mind/memory, knowledge/understanding and love/will in the Godhead because the Holy Trinity consists of a perfect unity. In the human image on the other hand, these elements functioned together but disproportionately and separately, thus not in the same perfect symmetry as the Godhead.²¹⁶ The cause of this unbalanced operating of the human trinity has to do with, among other things, the temporal and transient character of the existence of the human mind which is at a natural discrepancy with the divine and eternal. The human propensity for sin and turning away from God are of influence here as well.

Augustine stresses that this construction is merely an analogy for humans to begin to fathom the Holy Trinity. He likens the higher part of the mind to a mirror in our soul -as in the quote above- through which the mind's eye can gaze at the faint reflection of the Holy Trinity.²¹⁷ Thus the intellect can contemplate in itself a number of immaterial triads which may resemble the Trinitarian Godhead, but it cannot see God as He truly is. On account of His incomprehensibility, Augustine instructs of the necessity of faith: to first believe in order to comprehend. He reminds that in this life we have the certitude of faith; in the next life, the certitude of knowledge.²¹⁸

214 The conscious act of 'willing' is involved here as well.

215 XV.12.22, 14.23-24, 15.25-26.

216 XV.17.28, 20.39, 23.43, and 26.47. Augustine shows a number of different ways in which the human trinity reflects or is related to the Holy Trinity. This example is one of many.

217 See also *Trin.* XV.23.44 and 24.

218 e.g.: *Trin.* XII.14.23: treated in V.3.iii.g. This subsection is based upon my article, "Prayer", forthcoming.

4.ii.b. Epistemological Ascent

Because an extensive synthesis was already given in section 3.iii.h., a short résumé here will suffice: the trinities concerning one's gaze of the material world by sense perception did not qualify as images of God, as they pertained to the outer man and are of material nature (*Trin.* XI). In describing the trinities in the rational soul, Augustine differentiated two kinds of self-knowledge: *se cogitare* of the individual historical self, the lower rational soul. *Se nosse* was the perception of the traits of the existential self, which all humans universally share. We concluded that *se nosse* could be derived by intellectual vision, which corresponded to the consciousness of the *imago Trinitatis* (*Trin.* VIII-X). In *Trin.* XI-XIII, Augustine expounded two main types of knowledge: *scientia* and *sapientia*; the first relating to knowledge obtained from the world of which the mind retained images; the second, to contemplation, acquiring wisdom by intellectual vision: the consciousness of the *imago Trinitatis*. These terms made up an ascent within the rational soul, from discursive thinking to an intuitive, immediate experience of truth in the upper region of the intellect-image of God. An epistemological ascent was further illustrated by the mind's 'offspring': human *verba* or truth which were apparently intended to be experienced in different degrees; the lowest pertaining to the individual self-knowledge containing exterior material images (*Trin.* VIII-X), and the higher, to the knowledge or self-knowledge obtained while contemplating the Ideas, the highest Truth, the *Verbum Dei* (for example in XV.14.24). Augustine added that a *verbum* could not be expressed in human language (see V.3.iii.c). Could Augustine's theory of *verbum* include the supra-rational terrain of incomprehensibility in the illumination of Christ? If that were so, we could add the aspect of ineffability to one of the characteristics in Augustine's theory of intellectual vision.

There was no real sign of failure in Augustine's account of the ascent to God; when desiring to know, one could call upon Christ and ask for grace. When the will was working well, it pleaded to Christ through prayer. As to why Augustine devoted so much space to the blockages involved in the ascent, original sin, the broken will and other—in the eyes of some—pessimistic or realistic—aspects, Augustine's reading of Plotinus' doctrine of the intellect can supply us with some answers. It is plausible that after reading the *Enneads*, Augustine deemed it necessary to bring his own thinking about the ascent into more balance; which is to say, he would correct the overly optimistic depiction of the intellect in certain passages of the *Enneads*, in which there were no limitations posed to its access to the *kosmos noëtos*.²¹⁹ This hypothesis will be examined more closely in the Chapter VI.5.v. and considered in the light of all other aspects of this study.

To return to the summary of Augustine's epistemology, other elements were present as well: in order to obtain knowledge of God, one must first rely on a strong sense of accurate faith, derived from Scripture; a knowledge which one does not necessarily fathom initially. In addition to this, Augustine advocated activating and exercising the intellect. Obtaining knowledge of God demanded the working of a good functioning will to turn to Christ (*conversio*); Christ continuously healed the will which temporarily released one's mind from the multitude of worldly images or unhealthy attachments which blocked the view of God. In *Trin.* Augustine fused love with the workings of the will. Desire and love were forces which impelled the soul upwards to her origins. The remainder of Augustine's account of the ascent will be continued from the perspective of love.

4.ii.c. The Ascent by Love

Although Augustine regarded the ascent of love actually beginning with the gaze of beauty in material vestiges which inspired love and desire (XV.2.3), in *Trin* he is predominantly preoccupied

²¹⁹ Treated in Chapter III.3.iv. and 4.iv.

with spiritual love arising from the desire to know something, especially something which one does not yet fully know. Having heard of something which has been praised, one's intellectual appetite is stimulated and the desire is awakened to enjoy the beauty of this object or to learn of a certain doctrine (X.1.1, 1.2, *etc.*). Starting with the inquiry of how we can love something which we do not fully know, Augustine studied the collaboration between the elements love and knowledge in the mind in all its facets. This following is brief résumé from the synthesis in section 3.iv.i. From sense perception, proceeding inwardly, one encountered intramental material images which the soul could delight in and attach to. Yet loving these images or even the world, from where they derived, would impede a vision of God or a true conception of self. In search of the latter, the soul required God's grace to ascend further to the higher self, the intellect, which was able to contemplate what it loved most in the divine light of Christ and his Ideas. We discussed in that subsection two kinds of self-love which Augustine posited: the self-love based upon the images was a kind of *imago deformata*. The other was of an enduring character, that of the image of God. Its focus was directed upward to the divine Forms and loved God through his Ideas, Goodness and Justice.

The experience of loving God or loving someone always entailed love for ideal qualities in the eternal Ideas.²²⁰ Augustine added an attribute to his theory of Ideas: faith in what one has learned of God but which cannot yet be fully understood, stimulated this love for the Forms (*Trin.* VIII-IX). Loving God in faith would certainly lead to a clearer conception of God. The more passionate we love God, Augustine stated, the more we see God in the immutable Forms of Good and Justice. These were the ideal Forms with which we should strive to live in accordance. Love was then equated with love for the Good, because God was total Good; God was Love itself.

Even though Augustine considered the entire Holy Trinity as Love by virtue of its unity of the three Persons, and as such, was the source of all human love, it was the mission of the Holy Spirit to pour love into human hearts. Thanks to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we are able to love others (XV.20.39, XV.22.42, *etc.*). Enjoying God's love enabled us to love others, as God's love naturally flowed from one human soul to the other. The human *imago Trinitatis* was elevated as it were by Christ and the Holy Spirit to a vision of God –God as a unity of three divine Persons. In the state of mind of worshipping the Holy Trinity, one experienced one's true self. Augustine used the biblical terms faith, hope and love to describe the ascent. Hope involved the desired blessed vision in the afterlife, the complete face to face sight of God. Augustine's view was that human love actualized and realized its greatest potential in the intellect which was always focused on God and desired God.

4.ii.d. God's Intelligibility and Incomprehensibility

In section 2.vii. of this chapter on Augustine's teaching of the Trinitarian Godhead, his positive and negative theology was discussed. Here Augustine's stance was noted that God was intelligible to the human mind, yet in His magnitude and infinity, incomprehensible. This study illustrated the various ways in which Augustine depicted the human mind responding to these two aspects. In this subsection, these aspects will be reviewed.

Augustine asserted that God the Trinity was to some extent intelligible. Although the human mind was not able to plunge itself in the divine substance and simply bask in this realm on his own will, it could nonetheless grasp with its rational capacity certain aspects of the divine without having truly consciously experienced God in his true Being. A few examples of these aspects were: the understanding of the perfect unity of the Holy Trinity; the ontological characteristics of the

220 This recalls Plotinus' conception of the *Nous* as location for the Ideas; that all desires lead to the Good-to the Form of the Good (*Enn.* VI.7.21) God (*Nous*) is Form (*Enn.* VI.7.28).

divine (immaterial, eternal, immutable and infinite); or that the Holy Trinity was of a magnitude far extending human reality. That the soul itself did not possess these kinds of divine characteristics was discernable in human nature and psychology.

God was also intelligible to the human mind through Christ in his two natures. He was in both cases an object of contemplation. In his human nature, we could grasp his perfect Love, Justice and adherence to God the Father, without us fully possessing these characteristics ourselves (VIII.6.9). In particular, we could identify with his moments of greatest adversity and passion as Jesus Christ. As Augustine asserted, they served as model by which to judge one's own behavior, acts and attitudes and for perceiving one's own shortcomings and sins (IV.2.4-3.6). Hence, Christ's physical human life, as well as the Scriptures which portrayed this life, served as an exterior source of intelligible truth. These kinds of knowledge were *scientia*, yet once understood properly, they were internalized and transformed to *sapientia*. It was imperative that this wisdom become internalized by conscious approbation, as in the embracing and cherishing of the truth, as Augustine described in his doctrine of *verbum*.

The other nature of Christ, in Augustine's view, the eternal, transcendent Son through whom all things were made, was also to some extent intelligible, as immaterial, divine object of contemplation. Christ remained in this way a "Form" of contemplation (XV.15.25, 16.26), similar to Plotinus' second hypostasis *Nous* which was likewise one and the same with the Ideas and oriented to the first Principle before it in eternal contemplation. The *Verbum Dei*, the eternal divine Christ, was always present in the highest part of the soul. His illumination was directly accessible through contemplation and prayer and was indeed necessary, for example, for the soul's transition from *scientia* to *sapientia*, and for the *visio intellectualis*, all of which facilitated insight into the divine nature. Thus Augustine depicted Christ at work on many levels in the upward path of the soul. The contact with His Light consisted of a momentary experience of the divine, which thereafter required processing by reflection, committal to memory and exercise so that it can be readily called upon again in a *memoria Dei*.

Augustine further supplemented his assertion of the intelligibility of God in his theory of self-knowledge. When developed, it would lead to universal and divine knowledge and become progressively more true. This was realized by purification: removing the obstacles to the insight into truth by pursuing the things which the intellect passionately desired: eternal goods. Augustine's efforts to articulate the intelligibility of God could also be understood in light of his critique of the Platonists, that they knew where the blessed Fatherland was but did not know how to get there (*Conf.* VII.20.26). They did not recognize the Incarnation of Christ, thus were ignorant of the active role he played in the human soul's ascent to God and the example he gave to become a more perfect image of God. Christ would essentially pull the soul up beyond the limitations of ignorance.

Yet at the same time the soul would continuously confront the incomprehensibility of God. In *Trin.* Augustine repeated countless 'We see now through a mirror in an enigma' (1 Cor. 13:12). 'Now we can indeed take it that by the use of the words "mirror" and "enigma" the apostle meant any likenesses that are useful for understanding God with, as far as this is possible; but of such likenesses none is more suitable than the one which is not called God's image for nothing (LZ: *Verbum Dei*). No one therefore should be surprised that in this fashion of seeing which is allowed us in this life, namely through a mirror in an enigma, we have to struggle to see at all.' (XV.9.16). Therefore, Augustine underscored here that in this life seeing God as He truly is, is simply impossible, we can only perceive the Trinity through Christ (XV.25.45).

Augustine also declared that realizing what one does not know was a significant and profound insight (X.3.5). The role of faith in his epistemology and his motif 'searching and finding'- unceasingly

desiring to know God in his doctrine of love, were examples of Augustine encouraging his readers to persist in pursuing what we presently do not and cannot know of God. As he stated in XV.15.25-16.26, the *Verbum Dei* was one pure singular Form, which we could contemplate. As such, the perfect unity of the Holy Trinity represented the highest form of singularity which existed. Thus an ascent to God for Augustine entailed removing oneself more and more from the multiplicity of the exterior world -one's worldly knowledge- to the unity and singularity of God within. Complete unification with the One (Christ), remaining with Him and enjoying him fully was to be anticipated at the resurrection (IV.7.11).²²¹

4.iii. Augustine's Ascent in *Trin*: How Far Can One Unite with God?

4.iii.a. Eschatology and Vision of God

In *Gen. litt* and especially *Trin.*, Augustine's referrals to his eschatological views were plentiful and played a major role in his doctrines.²²² For instance, he described life after bodily death of the faithful as the return to the celestial fatherland (*Trin.* III.4.9) when the soul would enjoy immortal and eternal life (XIV.19.25-26). The resurrection of body and soul in the afterlife²²³ coincided with other events: a perfect intellectual vision or *visio Dei* in which divine reality would be perceived face-to-face. 'There we shall see the truth without any difficulty and enjoy it in all its clarity and certitude. There, there will be nothing for us to seek with the reasonings of the mind, but we will perceive by direct contemplation.' (XV.25.45). He also wrote that the Holy Trinity will be seen when the Intermediary Jesus Christ hands over the Kingdom of God to the Father (I.10.20). At that time, human images of God will be cured of all weaknesses by grace, be fully re-created to perfection and become equal to the angels. They will in a sense resemble the Creator, yet will never be truly equal to the Creator on account of their changeability (XV.23.43). This glorious vision will be their reward for their good faith in this life (I.8.17).

From these statements, we can say that Augustine envisioned a trajectory of personal evolution, a pilgrimage, in which self-knowledge, self-love, participating in God's Love and Wisdom -the key aspects of the Trinitarian intellect- progressively increased in this life and culminated in the afterlife with the attainment of perfect knowledge of God.²²⁴ This was one of the longings which he expresses in the 'Prayer to the Holy Trinity'. At that time, he asserted there, we will desire to do nothing but praise God endlessly (XV.28.51). The following quote exemplifies Augustine's vision of union with God, as invoked by desire and love.

Furthermore it (LZ: the mind) would be unable to love itself if it were altogether ignorant of itself; by which image of God in itself, it is so powerful that it is able to cleave to Him whose image it is. For it has been established in the order of natures, not of places, that no one save He is above it. Finally, when it shall cleave to Him completely, it will be one spirit, and the Apostle bears witness to this when he says 'But he who cleaves to the Lord is one spirit.', by drawing near, of course, in

221 F. Van Fleteren explains Augustine's view as such: 'Through Christ, the search of the ancient philosophers is fulfilled. Christ is the means of salvation: the only means of reaching God: the One, the Good, the Beautiful. But Christ as second Person of the Trinity is equivalent to the Neo-Platonist "fatherland". He is therefore both means and end.' "Ascent of the Soul", AttA, 63.

222 See Chapter IV.3.iv.d.; *Gen. litt* IV.23.40, 24.41, 25.42, V.20.38, VI.19.30, 21.30, XII.35.68, 36.69; *Conf.* XII.13.16; *Trin.* throughout, i.e.: I.8.15-17; IV.3.6, 7.11, 18.24; XIV.19.25 and 26; XV.23.43, 24.44, 25.45.

223 *Trin.* IV.3.5-6. The apostle Paul on the resurrection and physical/spiritual bodies: 1 Cor.14:35-15: 55. Augustine adds that these bodies will necessarily be of a spiritual or intransient character (e.g. *Trin.* XIV.17.23). This too leaves many questions open which he does not further speculate on.

224 The passages XIV.17.23, 18-24 and 19-25 describe the gradual development from the outer to inner man, the transformation to the perfect image and the complete vision of God as far as the afterlife and resurrection.

order to partake of that nature, truth and blessedness, but yet without any increase in Him of His Nature, truth and blessedness. In that nature, therefore, to which the mind will **blissfully** adhere, it will live unchangeably, and all that it sees, it will see as unchangeable. Then as the Divine Scriptures promise, its **desire** will be satisfied with good things, with unchangeable goods, with the Trinity itself, its God, whose image it is; and that nothing may ever henceforth injure it, it will be in the secret of His Face, so filled with His abundance that it will never find delight in committing sin. But now when it sees itself it does not see anything unchangeable. (XIV.14.20) (McKenna)

Note in this passage that Augustine depicts a strong and almost immediate union with the second divine Person by means of desire and love: ‘Finally, when it shall cleave to Him completely, it will be one spirit.’ For this reason this passage is exceptional. However he is referring to a state in the afterlife, which is indicated by his shifting to the present tense: ‘But now when it sees itself it does not see anything unchangeable.’

4.iii.b. Conclusions on Augustine’s Account of the Ascent

The majority of researchers of *Trin.* agree that Augustine did not consent to the possibility of a true ascent to the Trinity in the sense of an ultimate experience of unification with the three divine Persons.²²⁵ In subsection 4.ii.a., I gave a detailed exposition on the ways in which Augustine expounded the difference between the *imago Trinitatis* and the *Sancta Trinitas*. This boiled down to essentially the same observation, that we cannot with our rationally and temporal, limited minds, distracted as they are by the surplus of intramental material images, completely grasp the complete immaterial, eternal and infinite character of the Holy Trinity. The perception of the trinities in one’s own mind will not tell us everything about the divine Trinity, because there is no comparison with the workings of the Holy Trinity and the workings of the human mind, where a perfect unity is scarce. Accordingly, Augustine recognized the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of imagining such an exhilarating experience of the complete *visio Dei* while still in this life.²²⁶ He persuaded the faithful to persevere in the desire for ultimate fulfillment, strengthening themselves with such activities as contemplation, meditation and prayer. Exercising the intellect and practicing holding one’s gaze on God, would also contribute to one’s progress of becoming a perfect image of God. Augustine was in complete faith that by longing and searching for the experience of eternity and infinity, one would actually encounter it. His suggested preparations for the ultimate *visio Dei* and beatitude, which would increase one’s love and understanding, were intended to usher in as much peace and contentment as possible now in this life. It was however not completely clear whether Augustine meant that saintly souls would truly see the Holy Trinity in the afterlife at the resurrection. One would see the Son and through Him, the Trinity. Augustine’s distinction between the ‘Creator and the creature’ in *Trin.* was not so impermeable that a human would not assimilate any divinity in this life. It was evident here that Augustine went to great extremes to provide tools to bridge the enigmatic present vision of God with the fullness of the one in the afterlife.

225 i.e.: A. Schindler, *Wort und Analogie*, 227; L. Ayres, “Triune life”, 75-76; Hill, *Trinity*, 26-27.; Brachtendorf, *Struktur* 38, 48-55.

226 XV.25.45. Augustine likely has something in mind as a perfect intellectual vision which he described in *Gen. litt* XII. Cf: Zwollo, “Divine Experience”.

5. Recapitulation of the Main Points of Chapter V

Augustine's doctrine of the image of God in *Trin.* aimed to fully describe the relationship of the rational soul -where the image of God, existed- with the Godhead, which it imaged (section 3). He specified that in the whole of creation there were vestiges of the Holy Trinity; trinities which reflect the triune Godhead could be literally found everywhere. Seeing that the image of God pertained to incorporeal human mind, Augustine carried out a full scale exploration of such with the goal to pinpoint which three collaborating intramental substances were the most analogous to the triune Godhead. In order to do so, he first established the criteria which the *imago Trinitatis* should reflect. These criteria involved the procession of the Holy Trinity, consisting of the following: God the Father brought forth God the Son; the love between the two which bound them together was the Holy Spirit (section 2). Hence, three divine, substantial Persons formed in unity one perfect essence.

Two triads in the human mind in particular approached the designation of 'the best image of God': the trinity of mind-knowledge-love, and memory-understanding-love/will. For example, the mind brought forth its own knowledge; the element love served as the binding factor between the two. These three elements were immaterial substances, yet together they formed, if functioning optimally, one essence.

Augustine explored throughout *Trin.* IX and X how the element love was intertwined with the element knowledge in the mind. He posited two kinds of self-knowledge: *se cogitare*-of the historical self and *se nosse*-corresponding to the higher self or that of the intellect oriented to God. He also differentiated between two kinds of self-love, a lower and a higher: the lower, the love of one's historical self and the higher, the love while in contemplation of the Holy Trinity, pertaining to the intellect (section 3).

Throughout books XI to XIII, he established other important differentiations in the trinities of the image of God, which were treated here as his epistemology. These were: the lower soul (*ratio inferior*) as contrasted by the higher (*ratio superior*); worldly knowledge (*scientia*) and divine wisdom (*sapientia*). Looking closer at these designations of pairing concepts, they proved to be corresponding to the pairs above -self-knowledge and self-love- in a consistent way. Their distinctions were based upon the orientation to the exterior world vs. the orientation to the divine.

Further, he demonstrated the differences between the knowledge or inner truth (*verbum intimum*) which was brought forth by an individual mind and the ultimate truth of Christ (*Verbum Dei*). The understanding of the latter was beyond the expression of language. It was conjectured here that a similar polarity was intended in his conception of the *verbum* as well. An inner *verbum* would be the truth of the physical historical self or limited to that of an individual- involving material images; a higher *verbum* would concern universal truth obtained by the illumination of the *Verbum Dei*, involving the contemplation of Ideas. The *Verbum* was also deemed the origin of all one's knowledge. He administered especially divine knowledge by His grace.

Throughout his exposition on the element knowledge in the aforementioned trinities, he dealt simultaneously with the element love in which his doctrine of love from other works was echoed (from his exegesis of the Letter of John for example). He established that by loving the ideal Forms, or loving the ideal Form of Good, or loving Love itself, one essentially loved God. By loving God one could automatically feel charity for others. The biblical commandment 'Love your neighbor' involved not just loving God, Love and Good but also loving the Idea Justice. This entailed loving others either for their love of goodness and justice, or for their own goodness, fairness and honesty. One's focus during intellectual contemplation was reinforced by desiring and loving God. Desiring and seeking divine knowledge led to discovering Him in truth. Love and desire were gifts from the Holy Spirit.

Augustine concluded that even if a person were able to realize the best inner trinity or image of God in her/his mind, no human could ever equal the magnificence of the Holy Trinity. The best reflection of the Trinity in the human mind was merely a vague likeness. Augustine described one's mind as a mirror, in which a reflection of God appeared, but only in the sense that the reflection was murky and enigmatic.

Augustine's epistemology was geared to obtaining higher *sapientia* or God's wisdom in the *ratio superior*, the higher mind or intellect, in order to actualize the *imago Trinitatis*. This study ascertained that Augustine's designation 'image of God or Trinity' was actually a higher, contemplative awareness contrasting with ordinary daily consciousness, on account of the fact that it was purified of material images from the outer world. In this ascent to the Trinity, one began with focusing upon oneself-*se cogitare* and ascended to *se nosse*, a more truer form of self-knowledge, complementary to intellectual vision (as expounded in *Gen. litt* XII.5.13) or to the contemplation of the eternal Forms or Ideas.

Yet the best images of the Holy Trinity were not realized when focused on the self, but completely on God. The best or highest attainable human trinity involved the activity of remembering, understanding and loving God. Augustine stressed the importance of embracing rules of faith (a kind of *scientia* or temporal knowledge) in order to understand conceptions in the long run which were not completely fathomed now, such as certain knowledge of God. He described the Holy Trinity as one equal divine entity with no divisions or hierarchy. Augustine posited intelligible aspects of God, attainable, for instance, at the encounter with the second divine Trinitarian Person, the *Verbum Dei*, when the intellect contemplated the Ideas in his Light. Ultimately, he deemed the Holy Trinity as incomprehensible, beyond the capacity of the human mind. In order to obtain knowledge of God, one could use a reliable exterior source, the Scriptures, where the content of faith could be found. Yet he also implied that the truth of sacred texts should be understood through intellectual vision (section 3).

As in *Gen. litt*, Augustine specified in *Trin.* that a final beatific vision of God would occur in the afterlife and after the resurrection (section 4). At this time, the *Verbum Dei* would completely renew and reform the human images to perfect images of God. These souls would then be in a sense similar to himself, the Son, a perfect image of God the Father. In order for the intellect to renew its image of God in this life, it could contemplate the Incarnation of the *Verbum Dei*, utilizing his life as example of how to become a perfect divine image. Augustine made much effort to demonstrate how the Son's Incarnation made up a part of the perfect Trinitarian divine unity (section 2).

As in other works, in *Trin.*, Augustine portrayed the ascent to God as a step-by-step elevation of consciousness (section 4). This study conveyed Augustine's accounts of the ascent as occurring in two ways: by means of obtaining knowledge and through experiencing love. The ascent by knowledge began with the level of sense perception, proceeding upwards through the mind, the memory, and encountering one's own physical imagery. This entailed lower self-knowledge (*se cogitare* which was equivalent to *scientia*). The rules of faith contained in sacred Scripture – both deemed as well as *scientia* – were expounded as stepping stones for ascending further. With God's grace, the soul contemplated the Ideas in her *ratio superior*. Here she would reach a higher form of self-knowledge, such as *se nosse*. If turned directly to God, then she would acquire true knowledge – a higher *verbum* or *sapientia*. At this point, the soul recognized herself as God's image, simultaneously becoming aware of how she did not or could not equal God in resemblance. This higher state of consciousness – that of the *imago Dei/Trinitatis* – was essentially the equivalent of the *visio intellectualis* which he expounded in *Gen. litt.*, and characterized as an immediate, intuitive apprehension of truth.

The ascent to God by means of experiencing love occurred by perception of beauty. Beauty was perceived initially on the level of physical sense perception. In *Trin.*, Augustine focused predominantly on the beauty of knowledge, desiring knowledge of God and on the unification with the Trinity in love. God the Trinity was the origin of all love, desire and beauty.

By examining the two ways in which Augustine depicted the ascent to God -by knowledge and love- it was clear that Augustine regarded love as having the highest priority in his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis*. The sheer longing for unification with God was a more effective means to acquire divine knowledge and ascend than through the faculty of discursive thinking. As the church father himself demonstrated at the end of *Trin.*, the ascent to God by love could be attained while in prayer. Prayer was an act of love or desiring, in which the broken human will, damaged by original sin committed by Adam and Eve, operated the most efficaciously: by orienting itself to God. Augustine seemed to deny that the *imago Trinitatis* could unite completely with the Holy Trinity. The mystical unification with God was consummated by contact with the second Person, Christ. In the afterlife, this contact would constitute a total unity.

CHAPTER SIX

AUGUSTINE AND PLOTINUS: THE IMAGE OF GOD AND THE ASCENT

1. Introduction

The remaining two chapters of this dissertation will tie together the main points of Chapter III (on Plotinus' cosmology, image of God and the ascent to God) with those in Augustine's doctrines of creation and image of the Trinity (in Chapters IV and V), while keeping the many elements of Chapter II in mind (Augustine's appraisal of Platonism). Up until now, a great deal of material on Augustine and Plotinus has passed the review. In this chapter, we will tackle the first inquiry of this study: how did Augustine utilize the elements of Plotinus' philosophy which had been treated in Chapter III? Why did Augustine find those Plotinian elements attractive in order to integrate and substantiate his own doctrine of the *imago Dei/Trinitatis*? Which elements did he reject and why? In Chapters II, III, IV and V, a number of major similarities were already pointed out, especially in the sections 'Synthesis' at the close of these expositions.

Already at first sight, the list of similarities and correspondences is colossal. I did not expect the quantity of correspondences to be so massive because *Trin.* is considered a later work. It seems that the dominating assumption in Augustinian research is that the church father 'abandoned' Platonism after being ordained a priest and turned to study the bible.¹ This view is often supported by Augustine's statements in *Retractationes* 1.1 (his last work in which he evaluates all his prior publications in order to correct any doctrinal ambiguities). Here he admonishes himself that he should have been even more critical of Platonism in his younger years.

This chapter will not necessarily review all the similarities mentioned in Chapters III-V, it will only tackle the areas most relevant to the inquiries of this study, in attempt to determine and articulate where the major doctrinal correspondences and differences between Augustine and Plotinus lie. Yet as evident in the preceding chapters, it is often difficult to isolate and treat one particular element in the doctrine of the intellect/image by itself because both thinkers intricately weaved them into their cosmology, the Godhead and the ascent. Chapter IV already dealt with the many significant correspondences in the cosmology (*e.g.* in IV.3.iv.e. and 4.iv.b.). For this reason, this chapter will not compare cosmologies but begin with a discussion of their conception of the Godhead (section 2). Thereafter we will analyze the correspondences between the notion of imaging and intellect (section 3 'Image and Intellect'). Then the subject matter will work its way towards isolating the element love from the element knowledge in a comparison between Plotinus' notion of love *Eros* and Augustine's *amor* in *Trin.* in section 4 ('Image and Love'). The latter will concentrate predominantly on two aspects of love: human and divine from his treatment of the *imago Trinitatis* as well as the notion of the ascent to some extent which is deeply intertwined with the concept of imaging. The final section (section 5) focuses solely on the ascent. All these sections will begin by discussing the similarities and then conclude with a discussion on the most poignant differences. Section 6 will bring all the results together in a synthesis.

1 A.M. Bowery, "Plotinus the *Enneads*" in: *AttA*, 654-657, 657; (Bowery enumerates many examples of similarities in thought between Plotinus and Augustine, yet the examples are not from *Trin.*; *ibid*, 656); *Cf.*: J. Burnaby, *Amor Dei, A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine*, (Eugene, Oregon, USA: Wipf and Stock, 2007: previous editions: 1938, 1991), 49-50; L. Schumacher on Augustine's philosophical development: "The Theo-logic of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge by Divine Illumination", *Augustinian Studies*, 41:2 (2010) 375-399, 382-383; C. Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology, An Argument for Continuity* (Oxford: University Press, 2006).

The assertions in this chapter will be underpinned where possible with references from the *Enneads* and *Trin.*,² but not always illustrated with actual passages. The reason for this is the difficulty it imposes. Firstly, it is practically impossible to find *brief* passages from the *Enneads* which match up in a convincing way to *brief* passages in *Trin.* Also, often we see in Augustine's writing references to Plotinus' philosophy, to diverse concepts expressed in different ways. This phenomenon demands explanation, sometimes of concepts which are not immediately relevant. The other way around is certainly also true. A passage from the *Enn.*, might expose a multitude of concepts which Augustine made use of, but not all of the content is immediately relevant here. Rist aptly describes the woes of a researcher in attempting to provide literary evidence from *The Enneads* for proving Augustine's indebtedness to Plotinus.

*Augustine's reading of Plotinus was not that of a scholar but that of a determined seeker for the way to a good life based on truth. Hence a hunt for verbal parallels between his texts and that of Plotinus cannot do justice to the impact that the Enneads had upon him. Certainly such parallels can be found but modern scholars have become **bogged down in the details** of which exactly were the few of the treatises of Plotinus Augustine had actually read at the time of his conversion and the debate is endless and no objective means is available to settle it.*³

Thus, as Rist suggests, text comparisons often involve passages which take up much space and almost never match up perfectly. They often require extensive explanations which result in an exaggerated attention to detail. For these reasons, this study will not commit itself to text comparisons. Instead it will strive to illustrate similar concepts in both doctrines with the most poignant (and brief) passages.

2. The Godhead

2.i. Introduction

It must be said right off, that an examination of the notion Godhead of both thinkers does not pertain to the main inquiries of this study. Nonetheless there are some relevant observations to be made from the material in this study thus far, concerning the models of which the human images imitate and reflect, and concerning the influence of Plotinus on Augustine's doctrine of the Holy Trinity. These are of direct consequence for the upcoming analyses of the image of God and the ascent in sections 3-5 of this chapter. Another reason for including the aspect of Godhead in this final analysis is that this comparison often leads to different conclusions than are normally stated in scholarly literature, or which have been little or not at all recognized in other studies. These observations are

2 All English translations of quotes of Augustine are from Hill unless otherwise indicated. [*Saint Augustine, The Trinity De Trinitate*, Introduction, translation and notes: Edmund Hill O.P., (New York: New City Press, 2002). All translations of *The Enneads* are by Armstrong: [*Plotinus with an English translation* by A.H. Armstrong (London: William Heinemann Ltd. / Cambridge University Press, 1989)].

3 J. Rist, "Plotinus and Christian Philosophy" in: L.P. Gerson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1996), 386-414, 405-406. An example of a "bogged down researcher" for Rist is Mandouze 1968.

of interest to bring to light, especially considering the fact that Plotinus is generally not considered as the first philosophical resource, regarding Augustine's doctrine of the Holy Trinity.⁴

In *Conf.* VII.9.13-14 Augustine praised the Platonists for knowing where the Godhead was but criticized that they did not know how to get there. He showed there that they correctly understood that the Godhead could only be of a immaterial nature, eternal and immutable. Additionally, their notion of God showed similarities with the eternal Son of God from John 1:1-5 (Augustine's *Verbum Dei*), yet they missed the belief in the Incarnation of the Son of God as Jesus Christ. What they also missed was the accompanying theology of Jesus, which entailed, among other things, the notion of Christ as divine intermediary as well as the importance of humility. In *Civ. Dei*, he brought up again the conception of the Son of God as being an element of the Platonist Godhead agreeing with the *Logos* of John 1:1-5, however, this time he mentioned the name of Plotinus (X.2.3). Later in X.23, he gave a short description of the triune Godhead in Plotinus' and Porphyry's theologies. Yet thereafter, he did not give this matter any further attention.⁵ However there are more similarities than what Augustine described in *Conf.* and *Civ. Dei* which require mention here because they will lead us to more insights on the main inquiries of this study.

This section will deal with the similarities in the conception of the triune Godhead of both thinkers in the triune Godhead (ii.) and the similarities in the depiction of the relationship of the First and Second divine Persons-Hypostases (iii.). It will review the correspondences between the second divine entities (*Verbum-Nous*) (iv.). These topics will be followed by a discussion on: divine Mediation (v.); comparisons of the Holy Trinity and Plotinus' One (vi.); and the Holy Trinity and Plotinus' *Nous* (vii.). Subsequently, two significant differences will be highlighted (viii.). A synthesis and the conclusions will be given in (ix.)

4 The philosophical sources of Augustine's Trinitarian doctrine is still an issue of debate. See Brachtendorf's summary of this controversy in: *Die Struktur des menschlichen Geistes nach Augustinus, Selbstreflexion und Erkenntnis Gottes in De Trinitate*, (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2000) 20-24. From this summary there are several points of interests for this study. For example, many scholars, such as Hadot, *i.a.*, point to the Trinitarian doctrine of Porphyry (who posited an equality in the three Hypostases -as Augustine mentioned in *Civ. Dei* X)- and conclude that this would have been communicated to Augustine through the Christian Platonist Trinitarian theology of Marius Victorinus. This was the Platonist who converted to Christianity and translated Platonist texts (an item which Augustine mentioned in *Conf.* VIII.2.3-5).

In this context, another interesting standpoint (which Brachtendorf includes) is that of E. Benz, who defends the view that Plotinus was Augustine's Trinitarian source. (*Marius Victorinus und die Entwicklung des abendländischen Willensmetaphysik*, 1932). (This view was criticized by many.) His theory is: Plotinus, in a later work *Enn.* VI.8 (*The Free Will and the Will of the One*), deviated from his earlier scheme of the One as totally unassociated with Being. The result was that Plotinus inclined towards a lesser differentiation between the One and the *Nous* and towards an equalization of the Hypostases. In this case, the coming into existence of the second Hypostasis would have thus been regarded by Plotinus as a direct procession from the first hypostasis, instead of solely a metaphysical process outside of the One. As such, the *energeia* from the One would not only include Thought, Life, and Being but also Will and Self-knowledge, all of which were received by the *Nous*. According to Benz, this was detectable in Augustine's Trinitarian doctrine in the unity in self-thinking; and apparently in that of Marius Victorinus as well, which Benz suggests as Augustine's source. Benz argues further that Marius Victorinus would have transformed Plotinus' doctrine to a Christian Trinitarian one which Augustine would have found attractive. Hadot refuted many aspects of Benz' hypothesis and argued the greater likelihood of Augustine having directly read Porphyry's doctrine (*e.g.*: *The Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*—the authorship of which Hadot assumed to be Porphyry) would have likewise been the source for Marius Victorinus, which in turn could also have been read by Augustine ["L'image de la trinité dans l'âme chez Marius Victorinus et chez saint Augustin", *Studia Patristica* 81, 409-442; *ibid.*, «Porphyre et Victorinus», *Revue Philosophique de Louvain* (1972, vol. 70, no.7) 428-43.] There remain all kinds of problematic aspects to these theories, one of which is whether Augustine had indeed read Marius Victorinus directly. These issues-especially that of Porphyry as Augustine's source- entail a great many more complications, thus requires further study which exceed the interest of the inquiries of this research.

5 Long before Augustine's day, Christian Trinitarian theology had already been influenced by Platonism. The most extensive inventory of this influence on Christian theology is S. Lilla, "Platonism of the Fathers" in: *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, (Cambridge: James Clark & Co., 1992) 689-698.

2.ii. The Triune Godhead

If Augustine had written down further observations on the Plotinian Godhead, he might have noted many more points of agreement between the Christian and Plotinian Godhead. We will now review these basic correspondences shifting from the general to the more specific. The most obvious common ground is the Godhead as primary cause of all existence with a triadic character. In the theogony of Plotinus' three Hypostases and Augustine's three Trinitarian Persons, there exists a certain procession. In Plotinus it is a procession from the three Hypostases coming forth from the other in an hierarchical succession, the second and third Hypostases being an image and lesser than that entity above it. This constitutes a consistent verticality (*Enn.* V.4.1; V.1.5, etc.).⁶ The procession of Augustine's Godhead consists of the Father generating a Son and the mutual love of the Father and the Son generating the Holy Spirit. Augustine's departure point was secure in the tradition of Nicaean Trinitarian theology, in the conviction that all three divine Persons were equal and formed a unity, consisting of horizontality and no hierarchy (*Trin.* I.2.4, etc.). The theme verticality-horizontality will be discussed further under point viii.b. 'Differences'.

Augustine described in *Civ. Dei* (X.2.3, X.23) Plotinus' theology as consisting of the three Hypostases, which were different in character, yet operated in a certain unity. Augustine's Godhead was essentially the same; especially in *Trin.* V,⁷ where he analyzed the different missions of the second and third Persons who were nonetheless completely equal in essence or substance. Fattal's thesis that Augustine's doctrine differs from that of Plotinus' due to the latter's 'trithéisme'-three separate gods-, is therefore not convincing.⁸ It should be said however, that compared to Plotinus' conception of Godhead, Augustine's Christian system literally does not make any sense; it is illogical and furthermore, this knowledge had been derived by Scripture, through revelation, not by philosophical analysis. Although deemed a mystery, Augustine did not simply leave it at that. Instead he set out to substantiate this further by analyzing the rational soul (*Trin.* VII-XV) which he had designated as the image of God (*Gen. litt* III.20.30), in order to search the ways in which the divine Trinity was imaged, in other words, was intelligible in the human mind. Plotinus explored the thesis that in order to know God one must know oneself (*Enn.* V.3; V.3.7). Inspired by Plotinus' hypothesis, Augustine endeavored in *Trin.* to determine how far one's self-knowledge could lead to divine knowledge. This point will be examined in greater detail in the upcoming sections, especially in the 'Intellect-Image'(3) and 'Ascent' (5). We will continue here by establishing more of the basic agreements in the Godhead between the two thinkers.

We will proceed with the comparison, starting with the easiest first. Regarding the third divine Person in Augustine or the third Hypostasis in Plotinus, we can be utmost brief. There is simply no correspondence between Augustine's Holy Spirit and Plotinus' third Hypostasis, the All-Soul. Augustine noted this in *Civ. Dei*. X.23 as well.⁹ For Augustine, the Holy Spirit originated from the love radiated from the first Person to the second. In Plotinus' system, the third Hypostasis, Soul, originated from the second Hypostasis, the Intellect, who in turn originated from the One. These theologies share so little common characteristics that further analysis is unnecessary.¹⁰ On the other

6 R. Kany explains the differences between Plotinus and Porphyry in this respect as well in the context of the Platonist tradition. *Augustins Trinitätsdenken Bilanz, Kritik und Weiterführung der modernen Forschung zu "De Trinitate"*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 436-456.

7 i.e.: *Trin.* V.10.9; I.12.25, VII.4.7-6.12, etc.

8 *Plotin chez Augustine*, 106-116.

9 In these passages, Augustine tries to come to terms with Porphyry's conception of the triune Godhead and whether there is a Holy Spirit involved.

10 At most, both have in common the function of intermediaries.

hand, the similarities between the two second divine entities (Augustine's transcendent *Verbum Dei* and Plotinus' *Nous*) are numerous and therefore will require an entire point (iv) for an illustration. Considering the first Person in Augustine -the Father- and in Plotinus Hypostasis, the One, it is difficult to determine to what extent there is a resemblance. The following point will shed more light on this.

2.iii. The Relationship Between the First and Second Divine Persons-Hypostases

Augustine made use of Jesus' words that in order to come to the Father one must go through the Son (for instance in Matt. 11:20, John 14:6).¹¹ For Augustine, this involved the Son in his two natures: the eternal Word of God in his earthly Incarnation as well as his post-incarnational existence (*Trin.* I.8.16-17, 9.18-19, 10.20, 12.24, etc.) speaking to humans as the Inner Teacher (*Conf.* XI.2-11; *Trin.* XIV.15.21). This aspect too was true in Plotinus' theology as far as his depiction of the ascent to the One was concerned. One could not possibly unite with One without uniting first with the Intellect.¹² One could not prepare for the ultimate experience of union without purifying oneself and molding one's consciousness first to that of the *Nous*.¹³ Furthermore, Plotinus depicted the Intellect's turning towards the One at its inception in the stages of the Thinking and Loving-Desiring Intellect, which was likely intended for imitation by the human intellect.¹⁴ Additionally, this correspondence is likewise relevant to the comparison of both thinkers in how they view the relationship of the human image of God in its acquisition of knowledge and union with the Godhead by love.

Regarded in this perspective, it appears that Augustine depicted God the Father as completely transcendent and even inaccessible, having absolutely no direct contact with the material, created world, much like Plotinus' One and *Nous*. Plotinus' first Hypostasis was deemed incomprehensible. Does the same hold true for Augustine's conception of God the Father? The role or function of the Father in Augustine's doctrine remains unclear-he seems to have no other function at all besides being the generator of the Son and the Spirit and being simultaneously equal to them. *Trin.* does not seem to provide any further explicit characteristics of God the Father.¹⁵ In the upcoming sections vi. and vii., we will see how a comparison of Augustine's Trinity with Plotinus' One or the *Nous*, produces better results. For now we will proceed to the crux of this point concerning the relationship of the first and second

11 '...The fact is that the "man Christ Jesus, mediator of God and men" (1 Tm 2:5), now reigning for all "the just who live by faith" (Hb. 2:4), is going to bring them to direct sight of God, to the "face to face" vision, as the apostle calls it (1 Cor 13:12), that is what is meant by "When he hands the kingdom over to God and the Father" as though to say when he brings believers to a direct contemplation of God and the Father.' *Trin.* I.8.16.

12 'If there is anything after the First, it must necessarily come from the First; it must either come from it directly or have its ascent back to it through the beings between, and there must be an order of seconds and thirds, the second going back to the first and the third to the second.' *Enn.* V.4.1. See also V.5.6.20-23.

13 'You must become first all godlike and all beautiful if you intend to see God and Beauty. First the soul will come in its ascent to intellect and there will know the Forms, all beautiful and will affirm that these, the Ideas, are beauty; for all things are beautiful by these by the products of intellect and essence. That which is beyond this we call the nature of the Good (LZ: the One)...primary Beauty...beyond the spring and origin of beauty...' *Enn.* I.6.9.

14 See Chapter III.4.ii.a. and *Enn.* III.8.11.20; VI.7.35.

15 The following passage suggests that Augustine believes that God the Father is ineffable and simple like Plotinus' One. 'For the charity of the Father in his inexpressible simple nature is nothing but his very nature and substance....And thus is the Son of his Charity (Col. 1:13) signifies none other than the one who is born of his (LZ: God the Father's) substance.' (*Trin.* XV.19.37). As all characteristics of the two divine Persons, such as Wisdom and Love, Augustine also applies ineffability and simplicity to the Holy Trinity as a whole. He questions who God the Father is from passages in Genesis in the creation story, the Garden of Eden, appearing before the Jewish patriarchs, etc. In *Trin.* II.10.17, he concludes that it is possible that Scripture passes imperceptibly from Trinitarian Person to Person.

See R. Ferwerda on the metaphorical nature and terms of 'Father' and 'children', especially in Plotinus' deployment of Greek mythology, *La signification des images et des métaphores dans la pensée de Plotin* (Groningen: Wolters, 1965) (dissertation) 76-80 (note 13 and Chapter 3).

divine Persons in the divine Father and Son relationship. Plotinus used this designation as well: the One as Father (or the Fatherland)¹⁶ with the *Nous* playing the role as the Son (*Enn.* III.8.11.37, V.1.3, etc.); and then in a second instance: the Intellect in the role of Father (*Enn.* V.1.7.44-46) in which his offspring, in plurality, were the image-*Logos* of the Intellect, the Soul, as well as the individual intellects-*logoi*.¹⁷ In *Trin.*, the terminology of the relationship Father-Son in the Holy Trinity (*parens-prolens*) was extensively utilized, even applied to the human mind.¹⁸ Augustine explicated that the terminology Father-Son was not to be understood in a sense-oriented mode of thinking.¹⁹ The same can be assumed for Plotinus as well.

Thus, this point illustrates that Plotinus' centralization of the second Hypostasis in relation to its Father was likely highly interesting for Augustine. It not only corresponded to the Christian divine Father-Son relationship but paved the way for him to accept other aspects of Plotinus' philosophy and integrate them into his own philosophical exposition of the Godhead. Augustine's account of the ascent of the soul was likewise centered upon the second Person and his relation to the First. Along with his Platonist orientation, he could fully take advantage of the words of Jesus, that the faithful must come first to Him in order to return to God the Father.

2.iv. The Second Divine Person: the Verbum-Nous: the Axis of Cosmology and Redemption²⁰

Augustine's awareness of the correspondences between the second Person in Christian doctrine and the second Hypostasis Intellect in Neo-Platonism was evident in *Conf.* VII.9.13, in his mentioning of the similarities between the Christian Son of God and an entity of which he had read in the *libri platonicorum*. He recognized the affinities again in *Civ. Dei* X.28 where he discussed the *Patrikos Nous* in Porphyry's conception of the Godhead and associated him with Christ.²¹ There is abundant literature on the common characteristics between Augustine's *Verbum Dei* and Plotinus *Nous*.²² Because the points of correspondence here are plentiful, it will be practical to just enumerate the

16 i.e.: *Enn.* I.6.8.22, V.8.1, VI.8.14.35-40, etc.

17 Treated in Chapter III.2.ii.g., e.g.: *Enn.* 2.2.20; III.7; V.9.6.11, etc. See also point (v.).

18 e.g. *Trin.* IX.9.14-end; XI.7.11; XV.10.19, 11.20 and 14.24.

19 In *Trin.* XII.5.5, Augustine refutes a person who posits that there should be a Mother involved in the generation of the Son and the Holy Spirit—an etymologically feminine term in Hebrew—which should be regarded as daughter of the Father.

20 There are opponents to this view as well. An example of many: V. Boland argues against Augustine's assimilation of characteristics of the three Hypostases of Plotinus and deems the differences between the two thinkers' conceptions of the Godhead as too radical for meriting plausibility. Boland denies that Augustine modelled his *Verbum Dei* on the characteristics of the *Nous*. 'In fact Augustine seems to be unaware of the nature of Plotinus' hypostases.' In 1937, P. Henry asserted that Augustine assimilated the *Nous* of Plotinus to the *Logos* of the Fourth Gospel ['Augustine and Plotinus' *JTS* 38 (1937) 20]. Henry's work received a broad approbation. Boland regards Henry's statements however as too simple. Supporting Hager ('Metaphysik und Menschbild', p.97) who 'rightly sees the fundamental difference between Plotinus and Augustine in the latter's understanding of the "The Trinity of divine persons"' and who argues that Augustine may have assimilated the One and the Intellect in his thinking, e.g. in *Div. Qu.* 23 (LZ: incorrect reference), Boland maintains that this did not survive long in this thinking. ['*Ideas in God According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, Source and Synthesis*. (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 87]. As can be proved by this study, Boland's standpoint is not justified.

21 See also Chapter II.2.iii.h. Porphyry's conception of 'Father Intellect' is essentially the same as that of Plotinus; the difference between their conceptions is that Porphyry presumably does not always adhere to Plotinus' general strict hierarchy of the hypostases. (Nb: Porphyry's conception of *Nous* was based upon Plotinus'. The latter described the One in a later treatise as associated with Being and Substance, *Enn.* VI.8.15 and 16.) Porphyry brings the Hypostases to a more or less triune equality. This is the subject of discussion a few sections further in *Civ. Dei* X.23, where Augustine returns to Porphyry's and Plotinus' metaphors of the Father in the Neo-Platonist triune Godhead.

22 Cf. e.g.: L. Zwollo, "Plotinus' Doctrine of the *Logos* as a Major Influence on Augustine's Exegesis of Genesis", *Augustiniana* 60 (2010) 3-4, 235-261, 249-250; Fattal, *Plotin chez Augustin*, 83-88; É. Gilson, *Introduction à l'Étude de Saint Augustin*, (Paris: Librairie Philosophique, J. Vrin, 1929), 3e édition, 265-275; O. Perler, *Der Nus bei Plotin und das Verbum bei Augustinus als vorbildliche Ursache der Welt*, (Paderborn: Bonifazius-Druckerei, 1930); Brachtendorf, *Stuktur*, e.g.: 18.

similarities briefly with their references. Many of the points listed here were already pointed out in the material treated in previous chapters.

-The *Nous* is a *Logos*, an utterance and an image of the One (Fatherland). The *Verbum Dei* – is a Word-utterance of God the Father.²³

-Augustine's *Verbum Dei* is 'through whom God created the world' or the Creator (*Trin.* IV.1.3). Plotinus' *Nous* is the demiurge, in whom the intelligible world existed, the invisible, immaterial basis of all material existence, the creator of the divine Soul. The divine Soul (Nature) and divine *Logos* are Forming principles and creators involved directly with the material world (*Enn.* III.2.2).

-The Ideas are in the *Nous* in Plotinus; the *Nous* and the intelligible world in Plotinus are one (*Enn.* V.5.1, etc.); Augustine's *Verbum Dei* is likewise the source of the eternal creation principles.²⁴ For humans they (both the divine Person and the Ideas) serve as objects of contemplation while rising to a higher consciousness of God.²⁵

-The *Verbum Dei* is also described by Augustine with characteristics of Plotinus' notion of *Logos*, (as well as the World Soul): as the divine entity responsible for the material creation and Formation (Rational) Principle).²⁶ The *Rationes*, the creation principles which exist in Augustine's *Verbum Dei*, were the 'Ideas of God' as well as the Form principles for all things existing in the world. They occur, just as the *Logos/logoi*, on three levels of reality. In this way, the Plotinian *Logos* and the Augustinian *Verbum Dei* both share the trait of being transcendent as well as immanent in the visual world. This latter aspect is explained in more detail in point v. below on 'Divine Mediation'.

-In Augustine's thought, the *Verbum Dei* is eternal and unchangeable yet manifests in the human world, firstly in his Incarnation in human history and then in human minds and hearts as model and inner Teacher. The Holy Spirit, equally divine, manifests in the human hearts and minds through the outpouring of love. The human world and the highest part of the human mind, the *imago Dei/Trinitatis* are certainly not divine but temporal and mutable. Yet in their immanence, the second and third Persons of the Trinity retain their divinity, dwelling in the realm of eternity and changelessness. As such, their contact with the external world does not affect their divine and transcendent character (*Trin.* IV.20.27-28).

This construction corresponds to Plotinus' Soul-Nature and the *Logos*: they are transcendent divine entities which manifest immanently in the world as well as within the human being.²⁷ While forming matter, they remain divine and transcendent. In analyzing Augustine's intellect-*imago Trinitatis* and Plotinus' human *nous* in the upcoming sections (section 3: Image-Intellect), we will see how the notions of the human soul: its *logos* and *nous* of Plotinus played an important role in Augustine's defining the two rational (upper) regions of the mind.

-The second divine entities of both thinkers are associated with eternal Light and Wisdom-the

23 Plotinus: Chapter III.2.ii.b.; e.g.: *Enn.* V.1.7.1-5; VI.7.17.39. In VI.7, trace *ichnê* is used synonymously with image *eikôn*. / Augustine: Chapter IV.2.ii.a.; e.g.: *Gen. litt.* I.2.6,4.9, 5.11; *Trin.* IV.20.27, VII.1.1 XV.14.23, 21.40.

24 Chapter IV.2.ii.a.; *Trin.* IV.1.3; *Gen. litt.* II.8.17, etc.

25 Plotinus: *Enn.* V.5.2; Augustine: Chapter IV.4.ii; *De Ideis*, *Gen. litt.* XII.27.25.

26 Treated in Chapters III.2.ii.e. and IV.2.v.; Zwollo, "Plotinus', *Logos*", 240, 249-250, 254-255.

27 *Enn.* III.8.2: treated in Chapter III.2.ii.f. and g.

origin of all knowledge. Plotinus' *Nous* is not only the source of the divine Ideas (or Life) which one perceives through illumination, it is Wisdom and Truth itself, precisely as Augustine's second divine *Person*, the *Verbum Dei*. The following quote from the *Enn.* illustrates the characteristics of the Intellect which are similar to those of Augustine's *Verbum Dei*.

This life is wisdom, wisdom not acquired by reasonings (logismois), because it is always present, without failing which would make it need to be searched for; for it is the first, not derived from any other wisdom: the very being of Intellect is wisdom: it does not exist first and then become wise. For this reason, there is no greater wisdom: absolute knowledge²⁸ has its throne beside Intellect in their common revelation, as they say symbolically Justice is throned beside Zeus. All things of this kind there are, like images seen by their own light, to be beheld by 'exceedingly blessed spectators'.²⁹ The greatness and power of this wisdom can be imagined if we consider that it has with it and has made all things, and all things follow it, and it is the real beings, and they came to be along with it, and both are one, and reality is wisdom there. (Enn. V.8.4.40-49)³⁰

This citation does not include all the common characteristics between the *Verbum Dei* and the *Nous*, but in its brevity it does include many, such as: the association of the second Hypostasis with Wisdom; a reference to a relationship of the first Hypostasis with the second, '*it does not exist first and then become wise*'³¹; the inclusion of Justice: '*Justice is throned beside Zeus*' (I am assuming here that Plotinus is using Zeus as an allegory for the Intellect, as he does elsewhere and that Justice is an Idea). Augustine also associated Christ with Justice (*Trin.* XIII.11.15 as in Rom. 5:9); Light: '*images seen by their own light, to be beheld by "exceedingly blessed spectators"*' -as in the Ideas seen in the Light of the Intellect; the unity of the noetic realm '*both are one*' and ultimate truth of the reality: '*reality is wisdom there*'. I am not suggesting that Augustine would have seen these passages and borrowed these elements. Elements such as God as Wisdom and Justice, the relationship of the second to the first divine Person are rampant in the bible as well. Augustine also associated the Creator, *Verbum Dei* with Wisdom, Light, Being and the intelligible world. If he had indeed read this treatise, then this passage would have likely convinced him that Christianity and Platonism shared many common elements, as he expressed repeatedly in *Civ. Dei* (for example, VIII.1).

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- 28 *Autoepistemê* is translated here by Armstrong as 'absolute knowledge'. His note on pp. 252-253 (*Enneads*, vol. VI) introduces a puzzling aspect of the Intellect: '*Plotinus distinguishes absolute knowledge and Intellect even in their common revelation: they are clearly not quite the same thing for him.*' As I see it, if absolute knowledge and the Intellect are not one in the same, then "absolute knowledge" could only refer be the One. Yet the term *autoepistemê* suggests to me the unity of subject and object as in the knowledge of the Intellect. The One does not know or think itself.
- 29 As Plotinus explains in V.8.5.20-25: '*exceedingly blessed spectators*' are gods in the higher world contemplating the Beauty of the Forms.
- 30 Plotinus is differentiating here discursive with non-discursive reason, which is the Intellect and associating the realm of Intellect with Heaven (*ouranos*).
- 31 Yet there is an astonishing similarity to Augustine's words in *Trin.* VII.1.2: '*If in this case to be is the same as to be wise, it follows that the Father is not wise with the wisdom he has begotten; otherwise he did not beget it, but it begot him.*' Augustine is clearly refuting this argument as he expresses more clearly in VII.2.3: '*So the Father and the Son are together one being and one greatness and one truth and one wisdom. But the Father and the Son are not both together one Word because they are not both together one Son.*' The latter sentence could be easily applied to the Father and Son relationship of the One and the Intellect in Plotinus' theogony as well.

-Another interesting correspondence is Augustine's application of the Platonist triad of Life, Being and Thought to the Son, Christ, characterizing the second Person as Knowledge and Understanding.³² This is completely in line with Plotinus, who used the same designations for the Intellect.³³ Again, the following quote is not intended to be a proof of Augustine's borrowing from Plotinus; rather of how Augustine integrated Plotinian concepts into his own thought.

PLOTINUS: *There (LZ: in the realm of the One), surely, one need not wonder if that which the soul pursues and which gives light to Intellect and in falling upon it stirs a trace (LZ: trace: synonymous with 'image') of itself, (LZ: the One) has so great a power, and draws to itself and calls back from all wandering to rest beside it. For there is something from which all things come, there is nothing stronger than it, but all things are less than it (VI.7.23.1-7) ... What then does it (LZ: the One) make, if it is like this? It made Intellect, it made life and from Intellect the souls and all else that has a share in reason or intellect or life. Then, surely, what is "source and principle" of these, how could one say in what way and how greatly it is good? But what is it making now? **Now as well it is keeping those things in being and making the thinking things think and the living things live, inspiring thought, inspiring life and, if something cannot live, existence.** (Enn. VI.7.23.19-end)*

Here, Plotinus writes of the source of the Intellect, the One-the Good, from which all things emanate and of which the Intellect is a trace or an image, which calls all things after it, back to it and the One. At the end of this quote, the characteristics of Intellect are enumerated: Absolute Thought, Being and Life. Not mentioned in this quote, are the Ideas or Forms pertaining to Being and Life in the noetic realm. In the chapter preceding this one (Enn. VI.7.22), Plotinus explains the origin of all perceptible beauty in material images in the eternal Forms, whose source, as well as the source of all love, is the One. The One is not equal to the Intellect, it is its source, thus greater than the *Nous*. Yet Being, Life and Thought are one in the *Nous*. Augustine's perusal of these noetic characteristics is best expressed in *Trin.* VI.10.11-12. Here he mentions the *Verbum Dei's* equality to God the Father as perfect Image of God, in whom the characteristics Thought (as Understanding) Being, and Life exist, and in whom the unchangeable Forms exist. *Verbum Dei* dwells in perfect unity with the entire Holy Trinity.

AUGUSTINE: *As regards the image, I suppose that he (LZ: Hilary) mentioned 'form' on account of the beauty involved in such harmony, in that primordial **equality and primordial likeness**, where there is no discord and no inequality and no kind of unlikeness, but identical correspondence with that of which it is the **image**; where there is supreme and primordial life, such that it is not one thing to live and another to be, but **being and living are the same**; and where there is **supreme and primordial understanding** (*primus ac summus intellectus*) such that it is not one thing to understand (*intellegere*) and another to live, but **understanding is identical with living, identical with all things, being as it were one perfect Word** to which nothing is lacking, which is like the art of the almighty and wise God, **full of all the living and unchanging ideas**, which are **all one in it, as it is one from the one with whom it is one.** (Trin. VI.10.11-12)*

-The *Verbum* and *Nous* as Wisdom and Light are the main objects of contemplation for the human intellect. Plotinus states that the coming of existence of the world and all beings is the result of contemplation (Enn. III.8.7). Contemplation is also the activity which one ultimately desires and is

32 *Trin.* VI.10.11-12; see Chapter V.2.iv.

33 e.g.: Enn. V.1.4.25-30; V.3.5.29-37; V.9.10.10-13; treated in Chapter III.2.ii.b. and 4.ii.

the goal (*Enn.* III.8.5-7). The *Nous* turns to contemplate his Father, the One (V.1.7.6) who is the origin of all things, of all Love and Beauty.³⁴ The divine Soul and the human soul imitate the Intellect's contemplation of the One. In a similar way, Augustine stresses that it is Christ, the Son, Creator Word and Jesus Christ, who will bring the faithful to contemplation of Himself and the Father (*Trin.* I.8.15-17, 9.18). 'So the Father and the Son are together one being and one greatness and one truth and one wisdom.' (*Trin.* VII.2.3). Augustine also writes: 'This contemplation is promised us, as the end of all activities and the eternal perfection of all joys.' (*Trin.* I.8.17). He is referring here to the *visio Dei* in the afterlife which is also the goal: it is a reward of faith; as well as the reward of love and desire (*Trin.* I.9). 'In that contemplation, then, God will be all in all (1 Cor. 15:28), because nothing further will be desired of him, to be illumined and rejoiced by him will be enough.' (I.10.21). Creatures turn inward to become enlightened by the Creator, who calls its creation back to itself (*Gen. litt* I.3.7-4.9).³⁵

2.v. Divine Mediation: Logos and Verbum

Augustine and Plotinus both emphasized the differentiation between God's both saw creation and the material world itself. Both saw the necessity to include a form of mediation between these worlds. In *Civ. Dei* IX.17 (Chapter II.2.ii.) Augustine criticized the Platonist theurgists for using demons as assistance, but did not criticize Plotinus for failing to recognize the need for an intermediary. That is likely due to the fact that in Plotinus' cosmology, the use of intermediaries was rampant, although these were in no way comparable to the theurgist's demons (or even to Christ, whom he advocated as the sole, perfect Intermediary.)

Let us briefly review Plotinus' mediation from the divine to the material world. This was explained in detail in Chapter III on Plotinus in the sections on Plotinus' theogony (2.ii.f. and g.) as it pertained to the transmission of the eternal Forms from the Intellect down to the realm of matter. The mediation occurred primarily through the lower Hypostases Nature-Soul and the *Logos* because the *Nous*, the demiurge, never had direct contact with matter. The job of Nature-Soul was not only to create matter but also endow it with Form. This latter task was performed in conjunction with the forces of the *Logos*. In this way, visible things would evolve and become visible to our senses. Through this formation process, material things became images of Ideas. As mediators of the Forms to the lowest region of existence (matter), the *Logoi*, driven by the transcendent *Logos* outcoming from the Intellect, served as agents between the eternal, transcendent and divine realms of the Intellect and the Soul, and the visible cosmos. In this mediating role, the *Logoi* assured a system of communication between the different levels of reality.³⁶

Chapter IV.2.ii.-vii. illustrated how Augustine conceived the creation process in detail: the *Rationes* originating from the *Verbum*, manifesting as Form principles in the two levels of creation (intelligible and material).³⁷ The crux of the matter here is that the general Plotinian system of mediating *Logoi* is present with few changes in Augustine's cosmology. Solignac pointed these similarities out in

34 Treated in Chapter III.4.ii.a.; e.g. *Enn.* III.8.11.20.

35 '...so that it can be given the form by adhering to the creator, and by imitating in its own measure the form (LZ: Creator-Word, Christ) which adheres eternally and unchangeably to the Father, and which instantly gets from him to be the same thing as he is.' (*Gen. litt* I.4.9)

36 E.g.: *Enn.* II.9.1.33 and II.9.1.57-63. The Soul shares with the *Logos* some of the same functions in the Plotinian cosmogony, for example as maker of the world and also as mediator of the Forms from the Intellect to the individual souls. However, in *Enneads* III.2.2. the *Logos* is indicated as the most important intermediary and almost achieves the status of a Hypostasis. In the second and third treatises of this book, Plotinus states that the individual souls are governed by the *Logos*, the ruler of the visible world. In sum, in these treatises of book III, the *Logos* holds a much more influential status than the Soul as creator of the world (*Ibid.* III.8.3).

37 As stated in *Gen. litt.* e.g.: I.4.9, II.6.12-13.

1972.³⁸ In my article of 2010, I used the evidence in Solignac's study as a departure point in order to demonstrate how the doctrine of the divine *Logos* of Plotinus was emphatically present in Augustine's doctrine of creation and his conception of the Creator, the *Verbum Dei*.³⁹ For the sake of this point on divine mediation in Plotinus and Augustine, let us now review my conclusions. In comparing the two cosmologies, I showed that Plotinus' *Logoi* and Augustine's *Rationes* both served as manifestations of the transcendent eternal Ideas belonging to God and thereby effectuated the process of imaging. Both brought life and human bodies into the visible world and assured that vegetative growth would take place according to the laws of structural development.

Additionally I showed how the *Verbum Dei* -as Creator and as Intermediary between the divine and physical world which naturally included his Incarnation as Jesus Christ- could be both immanent and transcendent. This was to illustrate that the *Verbum Dei* was in this sense comparable to Plotinus' divine Soul-Nature and *Logos*; their manifestations being immanent in the world. This conclusion is indeed a helpful supplement to the previous point (iv.), in which the correspondences between the characteristics of Plotinus' Intellect and Augustine *Verbum Dei* were enumerated and deemed plentiful. As concluded in my article on the influence of Plotinus' *Logos* on Augustine's *Verbum Dei*, we could also assume that the *Logos* corresponded to Augustine's *Verbum* in some respects more precisely than the *Nous*. This was because Plotinus' *Nous* always remained in the intelligible world and had no contact with matter, which was not true for Augustine's *Verbum Dei*. This important observation is missed by many researchers.⁴⁰ Supporting the assumed influence of Plotinus' notion of divine *Logos* on Augustine's doctrines is the church father's own remarks in *Civ. Dei* X.17 (which was mentioned in Chapter II.2.iii.g.). Here Augustine commended Plotinus for his principle of divine Providence, which in the *Enneads* was designated as the *Logos*.

Furthermore, Augustine's *Rationes* fulfilled approximately the same mediatory function as the *Logos* and *logoi*. The *rationes causales*, for example, mediated between their transcendent source, the *Verbum* and the corporeal world, the *rationes seminales*. In this way, Augustine depicted the *Verbum Dei* and his *rationes* as mediator between God and humans, just as the *Logos* and *logoi* in the cosmology of Plotinus.

There is another aspect of agreement concerning divine mediation between the two thinkers: in Plotinus' cosmogony, the *Logos* and the *logoi* exercised their most significant powers on three levels: of the *Nous*, the Soul and the material world. This corresponds approximately to Augustine's three levels of existence in which the *Verbum* and the *Rationes* are at work.⁴¹ These were: the realm of the *Verbum Dei* and then at the two 'moments' of creation, respectively at the intelligible (where the human soul originated) and the physical level.

This point on divine mediation, illustrating the clear influence of Plotinus' notion of *Logos* on Augustine's doctrine, is therefore of direct relevance for the analysis in the next section. It serves as further support in elaborating how Plotinus' notion of *Logos* alongside his doctrines of imaging, epistemology and Intellect, was of seminal importance to Augustine's doctrine of the image of God and his epistemology. The axis of these two doctrines is namely the contemplation of the Forms

38 P. Agaësse, A. Solignac, *BA* 48: "Les raisons causales" (657-668, 653); "Les *Logos* et les *Logoi* chez Plotin" (654-657, 654).

39 Zwollo, «Plotinus, *Logos*», 252-261.

40 E.g.: O. Perler, *Der Nus bei Plotin*, 23-25, 31, 47, 72-74; E. Gilson, *Introduction*, 1969, 275, note 1, 261-263; P. Brown, *La Vie de Saint Augustin*, (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 2001), 122; M. Fattal, *Plotin chez Augustin*, 83-88; J. Brachtendorf, *Augustins Confessiones* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005), 130-131; J. M. Quinn, *A Companion to the Confessions of Augustine*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 360-366.

41 This was elaborated in Chapter IV.2.ii.a.; Augustine: *Gen. litt* V.7.28 and Plotinus: *Enn.* III.2.2.15-40; III.3.5.10 and III.3.4.20, 25-30.

and Ideas. In the cosmologies of both thinkers, the Forms were designated as synonymous with respectively the *Logoi* and the *Rationes*.⁴² Thus the *Rationes* and *Logoi* also play an important role in the ascent of the soul to God. There are however some significant differences regarding divine mediation between the two thinkers which require mentioning, which will be discussed below in point viii.c.

2.vi. Augustine's Holy Trinity and Plotinus' One

In point ii. on the triune Godhead, it was mentioned that it was unclear as to whether there was a similarity between the Augustine's and Plotinus' first divine Persons/Hypostasis. A certain similarity was found in point iii., which was formulated in the relationship between the first and second divinities. A parallel does in fact exist between the aspect of unity in Augustine's Trinity and that of the Plotinian One.⁴³ The incomprehensibility of the One, according to Plotinus, was due to its being beyond Form, Substance, Being and Thought,⁴⁴ which was for human minds beyond description and comprehension.

*In what sense, then, do we call it one, and how are we to fit it into our thought? 'One' must be understood in a larger sense than that in which a unity and a point are unified...it is the greatest of all things not in size but in power, so that its sizelessness also is a matter of power;...And it must be understood **as infinite** not because its size and number cannot be measured or counted but **because its power cannot be comprehended.**" (Enn. VI.9.6.1-13)*

The One was the only Hypostasis containing the most perfect unity because there were no parts or divisions in the One. There are passages in *Trin.* in which these same characteristics were applied to the Holy Trinity. See for example in the quote below, in which Augustine affirmed the 'unbounded and infinite' character of the Holy Trinity.

*So then, to direct our gaze to the Creator by understanding the things that are made (Rom 1:20), we should understand him as a triad, whose traces appear in creation in a way that is fitting. In that supreme triad is the source of all things, and **the most perfect beauty and wholly blissful delight**. Those three seem both to be bounded or determined by each other, and yet in themselves to be **unbounded and infinite**....(Trin. VI.10.12)⁴⁵*

Augustine's passage on the unity of the Trinity seems to make reference to another aspect of Plotinus' conception of the One: *the most perfect beauty and wholly blissful delight*. In *Enn.* I.6.7.30, Plotinus wrote: 'For this, since it (LZ: the One) is beauty, most of all primary beauty, makes its lovers beautiful and lovable.' Additionally, in Plotinus' account of the ascent to the One in *Enn.* VI.9.11.11-29, he utilizes the word *ekstasis* to depict the blissful union. Also, Augustine spoke often of the singular character of the Word of God which was beyond human language (*Trin.* XV.14.24, 16.26) and by virtue of the unity of the Godhead, this applied to all three Persons. '...the Word of God which is the Form of God without first being formable and afterwards formed and which could never ever be formless, but is simple form and simply equal to him from whom it is and with whom it is wonderfully co-eternal?' (*Trin.* XV.16.25).

42 Plotinus: e.g. *Enn.* III.2.2.36-treated in Chapter III.2.ii.f.-g.; Augustine: e.g.: *De Ideis*, *Gen. litt* I.9.17; treated in Chapter IV.2.v.

43 Cf: Fattal's discussion: *Plotin chez Augustin*, 106-121 and on apophatism.

44 By contrast, Augustine's Trinity consisted of pure Being and Substance (e.g. *Trin.* V.2.3-3.4).

To conclude, both thinkers posited the incomprehensibility of God in similar ways, as well as the intelligibility of God, discussed in the next point below (For Augustine, see Chapter V.2.vii.). Plotinus' One provided another area for comparison in Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity which will be treated in section 4 on 'Image-Love'. Here we will examine how the Godhead involves divine Love, such as Augustine's conception of God as Love and Good, comparable to Plotinus' notion of *Eros* coming forth from the One, the Good. As well, there are certain correspondences between Plotinus' notion of divine love and Augustine's Holy Spirit (or his depiction of the whole Trinity.) The greatest difference here is that there is no real 'Hypostasis of Love' in Plotinus, such as the divine love embodied into Augustine's conception of the third Person, the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the One has no affinities with Augustine's conception of the Holy Spirit as generated from the love from the Father to the Son. For this reason, it is now interesting to take into consideration Brachtendorf's thesis that Augustine developed his conception of the Holy Trinity by borrowing aspects from Plotinus' doctrine of *Nous*.⁴⁶

2.vii. Augustine's Holy Trinity-Plotinus' Nous

In answer to the question, which concepts did Augustine borrow from Plotinus for his formulation of his doctrine of the Holy Trinity, Brachtendorf negates the correspondences with the One as discussed above, because, as he argues, Plotinus described the One as beyond Being, Form and Thought.⁴⁷ As we have just seen, Augustine did associate the Trinity with these characteristics. Nonetheless, Brachtendorf's observations on the similarities of Augustine's Holy Trinity and the Plotinian *Nous* are also relevant. For Augustine, the Holy Trinity was the highest principle in his teachings, corresponding to Plotinus' *Nous*. Brachtendorf lays emphasis on the phenomenon of self-referencing in Augustine's explication of the Holy Trinity⁴⁸ which was similar to the aspect of the *Nous* 'thinking itself'. Plotinus devoted a whole treatise on the subject, *Enn.* V.3. Self-referencing was most conspicuous in Plotinus' depiction of the relationship between the One and the *Nous*, at the initial conception of the *Nous* contemplating its source, the One (Chapter III.2.ii.b. and 4.ii.). In doing so, receiving its characteristics from the One, the *Nous* conceived itself as: I am thinking, I am existing; therefore the *Nous* became pure Thinking, Being and Life (for example in *Enn.* V.3.5). The self-consciousness of the *Nous* was thus instigated by the realization that He existed. Additionally, this encompassed the awareness of its own *hen-polla* structure, in which multiplicity occurred within unity (*Enn.* V.3.11). This was exemplified by the self-knowledge of the *Nous*: the intelligible Ideas in their plurality being identical with the Intellect. The multiplicity of the *Nous* constituted its distinction from its source, the One and its perfect unity. Brachtendorf points out as well the self-referencing and the *hen-polla* structure as characteristic of Augustine's doctrine of Trinity.⁴⁹ The difference in Augustine's thought was that the self-referencing in the Trinity did not constitute an ontological diminishing as did the hierarchy in Plotinus' conception of the Hypostases. In this way, Augustine's formulation of the mutual penetration of the divine Persons entailed a much

46 Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 15-24.

47 *Ibid.*, 15: „Ausser der Hierarchisierung der Hypostasen weist Augustin vor allem Plotins These zurück, das höchste Prinzip sei jenseits von Sein und Denken.“

48 Chapter V.4.ii.a.: Self-referencing is implied in divine *Memoria*; *Trin.* XV.14.23. Admittedly, this aspect is not immediately obvious in *Trin.*

49 Brachtendorf discusses the Plotinian characterization of the *Nous* in the context of e.g., self-knowledge, self-referencing, the triadic Being-Life-Thought (*Struktur*, 24-34). He then explains how Augustine applied these characteristics in his conception of the Holy Trinity and accordingly how Augustine depicts the human mind perceiving the Trinity in itself as its image (*ibid.*, 52-54). See also his exposition on the correspondences of the one-many structure in *Struktur*, 15-19 in relation to e.g. *Enn.* V.1.8, IV.2.2, etc.

compacter cohesion than the three Hypostases of Plotinus.⁵⁰ This was the result of Augustine's characterizations of the three divine Persons being equally applied to the other Persons as a whole. (The exceptions to this were their specific missions and the relationship between the Father and the Son). Every divine Person represented the other and no one Person could be greater than another. Seen in this way, Brachtendorf argues, the unity of Augustine's Trinity corresponds more to the triadic unity of the *Nous* and the multiplicity of its intelligible world and less to the absolute unity of Plotinus' first Hypostasis.⁵¹ Brachtendorf adds that the intelligible world as depicted by Augustine, lacked the cohesion of Plotinus' theory. This could mean that Augustine was less interested in describing the relationship of the Ideas to the *Verbum* and specifically, their differentiation. Augustine also did not elaborate on the relationship of unity to multiplicity to the extent which Plotinus did.⁵² Brachtendorf's observations are well-founded, yet as mentioned in the previous point, he wholly neglects the similarities between the unity of the Trinity in Augustine's doctrine and the conception of the One in Plotinus'. Yet both are relevant. From here onwards we will deal with points of difference which have not yet been treated in this exposition.

2.viii. Differences

2.viii.a. A Personal Relationship

In spite of the Father/Son metaphor which Plotinus deployed for his conception of the Godhead, one might get the impression that Plotinus' Hypostases themselves are abstract and impersonal principles.⁵³ Emilsson's statement articulates a general scholarly consensus: '*...the notion of the divine in major thinkers in the Christian tradition, such as St. Augustine, has indeed been heavily coloured by Plotinus' notion of Intellect. We should however be on our guard in transferring features of the Christian God to the Intellect. The latter, for instance, lacks all the personal characteristics of the former.*'⁵⁴

This point-of-view is largely feasible. However, for the sake of accuracy, it must be said that Plotinus did not altogether exclude personal or human aspects to describe the Godhead. He sometimes dramatized the *Nous* for example, 'falling wildly in love' with its source, the Good (*Enn.* VI.7.22.1-10). Another example of his usage of human characteristics to depict the divine has to do with the 'defects', as discussed extensively in Chapter III.4.iv.a., the sense of 'failure' of the *Nous* to transcend its own mode of thought and find ultimate gratification in the love for the Good.⁵⁵ Plotinus sometimes personified many aspects of the All-Soul, in particular Soul-Nature which longed to attach herself to corporality and thus contemplated poorly,⁵⁶ which was the beginning of sin in humans.⁵⁷

All in all, Plotinus did not intend these descriptions to contradict his underlying ontology, that the divine was unchanging and eternal. Nor did these personal elements in the Godhead contradict the autonomous and transcendent character of the Godhead. The Hypostases did not approach humans in a direct or personal way. For example, Plotinus stated consistently that the *Nous* always remained

50 *Ibid*, *Struktur*, 18-20.

51 Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 15-19.

52 L. Ayres contrasts Augustine's usage of duality and unity with that of Plotinus, using *Trin.* X.8.11-10.16 as an example. These passages refer to human self-knowledge acquiring a unity of mind (not the divine) - "The Discipline of Self-Knowledge in Augustine's Book X-De Trinitate" in: L. Ayres (ed.) *The Passionate Intellect, Essays on the Transformation of Classical Traditions*, (London: Transaction, 1995) 261-296; 280-287.

53 Emilsson, *Plotinus on Intellect*, (Oxford: University Press, 2007), 5-6.

54 *Ibid*, 5.

55 *E.g.*: *Enn.* V.3.11, III.8.8.30-end, III.8.11.23.

56 *Enn.* III.8.4.14-end, III.8.5, 1-25.

57 Treated in Chapter III.3.v.; *Enn.* II.3.17.18-25; II.4.5, etc.

in the intellectual domain of the transcendent and intelligible.⁵⁸ The *Nous* personally calling upon an individual intellect was missing in his philosophy.

Plotinus likewise did not seem to depict a personal relationship with the Hypostases, that is, a mutual emotional relationship of the human soul-intellect with its source. On the other hand, as we saw in Plotinus' depiction of the ascent to love in Chapter III.4.v., the soul would never rise to the One unless it experienced the love and beauty of the *Nous* and the Ideas, (throughout *Enn.* III.5 and VI.7). The wondrous beauty of the Ideas incurred awe and desire for more. Union with the One was characterized as blissful or quiet ecstasy, yet also comparable with two lovers united in love (*Enn.* VI.9.10). The soul may have had a strong relationship to its source but the other way around, did not seem to hold true for Plotinus.

It is evident that the personal dimension in the Godhead was more far-reaching and pronounced in Augustine, who moreover demonstrated in almost all his works and especially his doctrine of the image of God/Trinity, that a Christian should have a strong, dependent relationship with the second entity of the Trinity, the Son and Word of God. This relationship was most prevalent throughout *Conf.* in which Augustine was engaged in a continuous dialogue with God. There, a mutual, personal relationship was depicted in which Christ consoled humans on a personal level and in which divine intervention was possible (for example by the initiative of Christ's grace.) In Augustine's view, God loved his creatures unceasingly.

Although Plotinus did not have a doctrine of grace, he did believe that the divine called its creatures back to the Godhead (for example in *Enn.* V.3.17.15-end). '*There, surely, one need not wonder if that which the soul pursues and which gives light to Intellect and in falling upon it (, ⁵⁹) stirs a trace of itself (,) has so great a power, and draws to itself and calls back from all wandering to rest beside it.*' (*Enn.* VI.7.23.1-5). This means that the first and second Hypostases touched human souls profoundly by their force of attraction, as illustrated in Plotinus' depiction of the ascent by means of the forces of *Eros*, Beauty and Light, which at the same time awakened souls to desire their true origins (Chapter III.4.iv.). As such, salvation in Plotinus generally involved the impulse to raise oneself back to one's spiritual home (in longing for beauty or the Good), an impulse inherent in human nature which was the result of the exuberant expansiveness of the One. The power to return to higher realms was in itself a gift of the procession from the One (*Enn.* VI.7.31).⁶⁰

At the heart of Plotinus' philosophy, absolute truth could not be identified with anything which was recognizable here in the human world with the physical senses. This was not absolutely the case for Augustine. The eternal *Verbum Dei* manifested externally in world history as a real person with a temporal human nature with whom humans could personally identify. The Scriptures, where this was transmitted, also played a major role in Augustine's epistemology (a major point in the next section). The personal element was intensified by the confessions of sins to Christ who in turn absolved them. In *Civ. Dei* V.20, Augustine claimed that the Platonists worshipped God. Plotinus did indeed pray to the gods

58 *E.g. Enn.* V.3.7.13-35; V.4.2.21-37.

59 The commas here are my corrections to Armstrong's translation, without which this passage remains excruciatingly difficult to fathom.

60 Rist, *Eros and Psyche Studies in Plato, Plotinus and Origen*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1967) 181. A few paragraphs before this, Rist contrasts Plotinus' conception of self-redemption with Christian grace (p.180) as many researchers do [Cf: i.e. J. Trouillard, "Procession Néoplatonicienne et Création Judéo-Chrétienne", in: J. Bonnamour (ed.) *Néoplatonisme, Mélanges Offerts à Jean Trouillard, Les Cahiers de Fontenay*, no.19, March 1981, 1-30]. Yet such a strong contrast is difficult to uphold, as Rist demonstrates here. For this reason, in this study, Augustine's doctrine of grace is not regarded as a stark difference to Plotinus' own conception of salvation and a comparison of such will not be treated here, although this point is an interesting subject for future study.

in the *Enneads*,⁶¹ yet he did not mean that the *Nous* would play a direct or explicit salvific role for the individual *logos/nous*.

Plotinus did not panegyryze the Hypostases, although he did underline their excellence and magnificence, of, for example, the *Nous*' penultimate perfection and beauty which inspired reverence and awe as demonstrated in the treatises mentioned above. All in all, the personal relationship in Augustine's doctrines was much more pronounced and extensively applied than in Plotinus' doctrine of the *Nous* or *Logos*. Rist's remarks correctly: '*Plotinus never speaks of the One's love for the creation or love for the humanity.*' Hereby Rist deems all the seemingly personal elements in the Plotinus' depiction of the Godhead as metaphors.⁶² In spite of all the subtleties mentioned here, I consider the subject of the personal and human dimension a major point of difference between Augustine's and Plotinus' conceptions of the Godhead. This topic will return repeatedly in the upcoming sections of this chapter. It was even more explicit in the theme love. In Augustine's case, human personal relations played a significant role in one's relationship with God.

2.viii.b. Hierarchical–Vertical vs. Equal-Horizontal

The most obvious distinction between Plotinus' and Augustine's view of the Godhead was the fact that Plotinus' Hypostases were hierarchically ordered in a strictly vertical direction; the three Persons in Augustine's triune Godhead were completely equal and ordered horizontally.⁶³ An important difference to note here is that Augustine did not posit any differentiation in the realm of the divine. The divine constituted in itself a triune unity; the divine Persons in Augustine's triune Godhead were unambiguously equal, which even extended so far as to include Christ's Incarnation which did not result in a sacrifice of his divine nature.

In Plotinus, the verticality of the Godhead was also reflected in his doctrine of the ascent of the human soul. The soul became actualized by becoming united with the divine Intellect, by doing so it became a better image of it. In imitation of the Intellect, it longed to rise further vertically to the One. Its actualization and unification with the highest principle was realized only by imitating the *Nous*, as when the latter came into existence. This was reflected in Plotinus' epistemology -and in Augustine's as well- which will be elaborated upon in the next section. For now, it is of interest to point out that in spite of Augustine's position of the equality of the Godhead, his account of the ascent of the human image to God maintained a consistent verticality as well. This is a point which even Brachtendorf neglected in his study.⁶⁴

As this study has amply shown, (especially in Chapter V.2.i. and iv., and V.4.ii.a.), the human image of God, the *imago Trinitatis*, was actualized by rising to and resembling the second Person, the Word of God, Christ, and most tangibly, by imitating his worldly physical existence. His life on earth was a demonstration of how humans could resurrect to immortality and become godlike. This essentially reinforces the idea that Augustine's depiction of the ascent of the image of God-intellect, included the same vertical orientation as that of Plotinus: starting from the sense

61 E.g.: *Enn.* III.7.11.8, IV.9.4.6; V.1.6.9; V.8.9.13.

62 *Augustine Deformed*, 70-71. Here Rist discusses the impersonal character of the notion of *Eros* in Plotinus and Plato in contrast to Augustine's doctrine of love. Although it is generally true that Augustine emphasized God's love for humanity much more than Plotinus, there are indeed passages in *Enn.*, which would contradict Rist's statement. An example is *Enn.* VI.7.22.19-20 where Plotinus writes that the One gives undiminishing love to all which is beneath it.

63 See Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 15.

64 Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 15; Ayres as well seems to overlook the verticality in Augustine's epistemological ascent. '*Augustine's understanding in some ways takes place in a "flattened" intellectual universe, there being no place for the intellectual hierarchy of Neoplatonism...*': "Discipline, Self-Knowledge" in: Ayres, *Passionate Intellect*, 285.

level, progressing through the soul and to the highest level of the intellect where it meets God's illumination.

In both Augustine's and Plotinus' doctrines, God was depicted as both intelligible to some extent but then to a greater extent incomprehensible. Thus the relevance of the difference in verticality vs. horizontality and hierarchical vs. equality of the Godhead in my view does not represent such a large difference which it might at first sight. However, this point will continue to be meaningful when we examine more closely how the intellect images the Triune Godhead in ascending in the doctrines of both thinkers. But will this make a difference on their views on the divinity of the soul? This point will be considered again in the context of the intellect-image (3.iii.f.) and of the ascent (5.v.b.) of this chapter.

2.viii.c. The Relationship Between God and the World: Creator vs. Creature

Point v. on divine mediation dealt with the correspondences between Augustine's *Verbum* and Plotinus' *Logos*: both thinkers posited the necessity of divine mediation between divine and material reality in similar ways. The ontological distinctions between two worlds in Plotinus' philosophy, discussed in Chapter III.2.ii.d, were as follows: the divine as transcendent and immaterial, as eternal and immutable; the material realm as temporal and changeable. These were identical in Augustine's cosmology (Chapter IV.2.iii). Augustine commended the Platonists in *Civ. Dei* VIII.6 and X.2 for their distinguishing the created world from the Creator, as if the thinking of Platonists and Christians on this matter was on the same line. Rist's comment seems to support this: '*...the gulf between creature and Creator in the Christian conception (of love)...is also present in Neo-Platonism between the One and others...*'⁶⁵

However, this study has shown that Plotinus' differentiations between divine and material reality were not always clear. Recalling Plotinus' cosmology in Chapter III (2.iii.a. and c.), when the world came into existence, the eternal Forms were transferred down to the regions of the last hypostatic level, the divine Soul, and finally to matter as *eidōla*. Matter in itself was a product of the divine Soul-Nature. The boundary between the lowest end of the Soul-Nature and the natural, physical world in Plotinus' cosmology was not well defined. Another point of even greater significance involved Plotinus' insistence that whatever pertained to the *Nous* remained always in the region of the Intellect. Yet he often neglected to mention the boundaries between the human *nous*, which belonged to the visual, changeable world, and the divine *Nous*. In III.3.iv. and vi., this question required extensive laboring before Plotinus' standpoint could be formulated in a satisfying way.

This study has additionally shown that although Augustine made some of the same distinctions as Plotinus, he differentiated the divine and material realities more explicitly.⁶⁶ For example, as we saw in Augustine's cosmology (Chapter IV.2.iv.), he depicted the creation act beginning with an initial phase, the realization of the intelligible cosmos in eternity and all in one instant (the material cosmos being realized later by the *Rationes seminales* in the dimension of time.) The first result of the creation act was the angelic realm of the *caelum*, which bore many traits of Plotinus' *Nous*, as

65 Rist, *Eros and Psyche*, 80.

66 Augustine may have explicated the demarcation line between the Creator and creature better than Plotinus, yet this does not mean that he explained *everything* better than Plotinus. Compared to the Neo-Platonist, Augustine failed to give an adequate explanation of how material images (particular objects of the archetypes) were formed by the *Rationes*. Nor did he explain the relationship between the material images in memory and the *Rationes*, to the extent Plotinus did, who did so in terms of discursive thought, which coincided with the activities of the *logoi*. For the latter, Augustine deployed for example the all-encompassing term *cogitatio*. Unlike Plotinus, Augustine was also hesitant to make conclusive statements on how the soul and its body came together and on the pre-existence of the soul. (See Chapter IV-note 12.)

a region of pure Intellect. However Augustine explicated that the *caelum* did not exist on the same level as the eternal Ideas in the *Verbum*; it was a level below in the created, non-divine realm.⁶⁷ It was nonetheless an eternal, immaterial region, where both the human soul and intelligible matter originated. As such, Augustine not only distinguished the immaterial from the material as Plotinus, he distinguished more clearly the divine from the non-divine.⁶⁸ In his doctrine of the *imago Dei/Trinitatis* this was also evident: the Being in the Creator contrasted with the being of the highest of its immaterial offspring-the human intellect (Chapter IV.2.vi. and vii.). Therefore I propose the following hypothesis: the differences in which both thinkers delineated their cosmologies had a direct effect on the way they delineated the status of the human soul-intellect: divine or not divine. The discussion of this thesis will be continued in the upcoming sections: section 3 on the intellect-image and then resolved in section 6, the synthesis.

2.ix. Synthesis and Conclusions

There have been a great deal of similarities noted here between Augustine and Plotinus regarding their conceptions of the Godhead. What can be determined as the most salient differences? As we saw above, the verticality and hierarchical ordering of Plotinus' hypostases did not serve as any hindrance whatsoever for Augustine to appropriate even generously significant aspects from Plotinus' triune Godhead. Recalling Chapter II, Augustine commended the Platonists and particularly Plotinus for their acute and accurate understanding of God. We have just seen that his appreciation also included Plotinus' conception of the One, the characteristics of the Intellect and *Logos*, as well as the depiction of the relationship between the Intellect and the One. Thus evaluating the comparison of the Godhead between the two thinkers, the aspect of verticality vs. horizontality shall from now on be characterized as a 'gray area', as an aspect with diminished relevance in light of the many similarities. Therefore it will not carry much weight in the final conclusions.

By saying this I am arguing against Brachtendorf's position (note 47, points vi. and viii.b.) that Augustine would have found Plotinus' conception of the Godhead uninteresting on account of the hierarchical verticality and because these factors were contrary to the Nicaean doctrine of the Trinity. Yet Brachtendorf did supply us with some sharp insights into the differences between the Godhead of Augustine and Plotinus, which we can deem as marked distinctions. They included two points: that (i.) Augustine formulated the mutual penetration of the divine persons with a much compacter cohesion than the three Hypostases of Plotinus; and (ii.) that the intelligible world or *Rationes aeternae* as depicted by Augustine, lacked the explicit cohesion with the second Person, as illustrated in Plotinus' second Hypostasis. The last point possibly indicates a lack of interest on Augustine's part to elaborate the relationship of unity to multiplicity to the extent which Plotinus did. Perhaps he did not consider it such a high priority, as this was already explained well enough by Plotinus and he assumed it to be understood. These three points however have less significance for the inquiries of this study, as we are aiming for examining the study of the image of God-intellect. The two differences which carry the most weight for the conclusions of this investigation are: (i.) Augustine's personal factor in the Godhead: the human incarnation of the second Person and his

67 Could Augustine's description of this region of heaven (e.g.: *Conf.* XII-XIII and *Gen. litt.* I-IV) have been inspired by Plotinus' description of heaven in *Enn.* V.8.4 *On Intelligible Beauty*?

68 One further relevant point pertaining to the cosmologies of Plotinus and Augustine is the hierarchy of separate realities of both thinkers: the highest reality being immaterial and divine, the lowest, material, physical; the highest is accessible or intelligible to the human mind to a certain extent. On this point, both thinkers have been attacked by criticism of 'their negative assessment' of the world or the human body. This critique is in my opinion not justified. I prefer the designation of their thought as 'otherworldly'.

personal and direct relationship with humans, and (ii.) his more extensive differentiation between the Creator and the creature.

3. The Image-Intellect and Epistemology

3.i. Introduction

In *Civ. Dei* VIII.5-6 (Chapter II.2.iii.c.), Augustine commended the Platonists for their conception of the immaterial soul, the rational soul, and their understanding that thinking was an immaterial activity, as well as it being an image of something immaterial. This section will demonstrate the accuracy of his observations as well as his indebtedness to Plotinus for his epistemology. Augustine's statements from *Civ. Dei* above will enter the discussions and evaluations in this section, in which the conception of intellect from both works, *Gen. litt* and *Trin.* will be considered. These were treated in Chapters III.3.iii. and 4.iii.; IV.3.ii. and 4.iii.; and V.3.iii.

The articulation of the human soul's relationship to the transcendent divine was the main occupation of both thinkers which they attempted to carry out as far as possible. In this section, their characterizations of the human intellect will receive detailed attention. However it must be noted, that the notion of the intellect and the epistemology pertaining to it is only truly complete after treating the topics of love and the ascent. The main theme of this section- the conception of the human image of God as intellect in both thinkers- is essential for the two final inquiries of this study. Yet it is not the most important analysis in this chapter, namely because the general similarities in image-intellect here are fairly unproblematic. Additionally, there is much consensus here in Augustinian-Plotinian research as to Augustine's indebtedness to Plotinus' epistemology.⁶⁹ This study is unique in that all the different corresponding aspects of the epistemologies of both thinkers, which researchers have agreed upon, are brought together here, examined and evaluated. As a result, this study provides a sharper glimpse of the influence of Plotinus and the most significant differences.

Even though Augustine explicitly included the element love in his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis*, this section will involve only the aspect knowledge and will require a reconstruction of his epistemology. This section will focus on specific elements in the epistemologies of the two thinkers which were responsible for imaging on the level of the intellect and acquiring knowledge. It will start off in the introduction with a review of the general definition of image (a.) and intellect (b.) of both thinkers. More specific points will be treated in more detail in the following subsection (ii.) on epistemology. The major differences here will be discussed (in point iii.) and will be followed up with a synthesis in point iv.

69 J. Pépin: "Augustin, *Quaestio De Ideis*, Les Affinités Plotiniennes" in: E.J. Westra (ed.), *From Athens to Chartres. Neoplatonism and Medieval Thought, Studies in Honour of Edouard Jeaneau* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 117-134; *ibid*, «Une curieuse déclaration idéaliste du *De genesi ad litteram* (XII.10.21) de saint Augustin, et ses origines plotiniennes (*Ennéade* 5.3.1-9 et 5.5.1-2)», *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses*, tome XXXIV, 1954, 373-400; reprinted in *Ex Platoniarum Persona. Études sur les lectures philosophiques de Saint Augustin*, (Amsterdam, 1977), 183-210; *ibid*, «Le tout et les parties dans la connaissance de la *mens* par elle-même (*De Trin.* X,3,5-4,6)» in: Brachtendorf, *Gott, Bild*, 105-126; L. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2010); Brachtendorf, *Struktur*; Fattal, *Plotin chez Augustin*; C. Horn, "Selbstbezüglichkeit des Geistes bei Plotin und Augustin", in: J. Brachtendorf, *Gott, Bild*, 2000, 81-103; *ibid*, "Augustine's Theory of mind and Self-Knowledge: Some Fundamental Problems" in: E. Berron and G. O'Daly (eds.) *Le De Trinitate de saint Augustin: exégèse, logique et noétique*, (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2012), 205-219.

3.i.a. Definition of Image and Imaging

There are few studies which extensively compare the process of imaging in the cosmologies of both Augustine and Plotinus.⁷⁰ Hence, the comparison below can be considered a further development in the research on this topic. For these upcoming recapitulations, we will return to the following sections in this study where the theme “the image” and imaging were treated.⁷¹ In the cosmologies of both thinkers, the theme imaging was an underlying motif, even though neither Augustine or Plotinus devoted a particular treatise or chapter of a work to this theme. Like Plotinus, Augustine utilized the term image to designate something which resembled that what it images but was not a direct copy and was thus inferior to its model. Material things were images of eternal Ideas. Immaterial concepts were images of divine archetypal Ideas, such as Justice or the Good.

A minor difference which could be pointed out here, is that for Plotinus, the English translation of the term ‘image’ applied consistently to all kinds of images, whether they were material things/ images of Ideas (generally an *eidôlon*) or beings who were images of higher divine entities (for example, an *eikôn* or a trace *ichnos*). Hence this signification of ‘image’ in the *Enneads* had a variety of applications and usages. On the other hand, Augustine seldom applied the term *imago* to sheer material objects. Instead he illustrated their character as particulars of Ideas (*singula* as in *De Ideis*), implying that a thing was a reflection of its ideal archetype. In *Trin.*, he utilized basically the same conception of ‘image’ as Plotinus’ *eidôla* or *ichnê* with the Latin terminology of *vestigia* or ‘traces’ of the divine.⁷² He also referred to physical images which were perceived by the human eye in corporeal vision.⁷³ Augustine’s term *imagines* referred to an essentially spiritual, mental phenomenon: pictures derived from sense perception in the imagination or memory. They were also designated as *phantasiai*=recollections in the memory or *phantasmata*⁷⁴=fabricated pictures by the imagination. These terms were obviously of Greek origin and employed as well by Plotinus, likewise referring to the temporal and transient images in the human psyche. Augustine explicitly distinguished all these kinds of ‘images’ from the image of God. Only the rational soul or the intellect could be truly

- 70 See Chapter III.2.iii.e.: «A short prelude on Augustine’s doctrine of creation and imaging». Cf: I. Koch, “Image et dissemblance: étude sur la notion d’image chez Plotin et Saint Augustin”, doctoral thesis, (Paris: 1997). Koch’s thesis is too general to be useful for my analysis and furthermore deals predominantly with the images on the material level of existence, not the mystagogical aspects with which this study is deeply involved. Plotinus is mentioned in I. Bochet’s article “*Imago*”, which gives the most extensive treatment as well as helpful references. The references to the *Enneads* in her article are mainly short and not elaborated [A-L, (2006) vol. 3. Fasc.3/4, 509-520, 509]. Sullivan’s two-page treatment is also too general [The Image of God The Doctrine of St. Augustine and its Influence, (Dubuque, Iowa: Priory Press, 1963) 5-7, 10, 14-15]. Lagouanère’s section on this topic carries the promising title “L’influence néo-platonicienne sur la théologie augustinienne de l’image”, yet does not contribute any new insights on this matter. His mentioning of the Neo-Platonist influences only concern the most basic Plotinian aspects such as *anabasis* and *epistrophê*, which is typical of many Augustinian studies. [Intériorité et réflexivité dans la pensée de saint Augustin. Formes et genèse d’une conceptualisation, (Paris/Turnhout: 2012), 443-447]. Other studies listed in the bibliography here mostly mention the influence of Plotinus’ system of imaging on Augustine’s doctrine of creation, but do not demonstrate it in any detail. Such as: M. Clark, «*Imago Dei*», *AttA*, 440-442, 441; P. Agaësse and A. Solignac’s article is instructive as to how the notion of *logos* in Plotinus (which is responsible for instigating the imaging process) is employed in Augustine’s doctrine of *Rationes*, concepts which directly involve his doctrine of the image of God. “Le *Logos* et les *Logoi* chez Plotin”, *BA* 48, 654-657, which is elaborated even further in: L. Zwollo, “Plotinus’, *Logos*”, 255-257.
- 71 For Plotinus: Chapter III.2. (‘Imaging in Plotinus’ Theogony and Cosmology’) in particular, iii.c., d. and e.; Augustine’s theory of imaging was dealt with in Chapter IV, in the framework of his doctrine of creation in *Gen. litt.*, in particular section 2, subsections vii. and viii.
- 72 e.g.: *Trin.* VI.10.12; XII.5.5; treated in Chapter V.3.iii.e. ‘Sense Perception and Material Images’.
- 73 The first and lowest of the ‘three visions’, such as in *Gen. litt.* XII.9.20, 11.22 and throughout *Trin.* XI.
- 74 In *Gen. litt.*, e.g.: XII.6-11 (and throughout book XII concerning spiritual visions); and i.e.: *Trin.* VIII.5.8, IX.6.10, X.2.4 and XI.3.6, 4.7, 5.8 and 10.17.

considered an 'image', because of its capacity to become a more perfect image of God, like Christ, the Perfect Image. Its potential to become immortal stood in contrast to all the other kinds of images which were of a fleeting, transient nature. Furthermore, he stated, the image of God in mankind was the highest form of all of creation yet just below the angels.⁷⁵ Plotinus called the human intellect an image of the Hypostasis Intellect and demonstrated that it was only the human intellect which could rise above this world and return to God. Common to the teachings of both, it was only the intellect, the highest part of the soul which had the potential to become illuminated and unified with the divine entity which it reflected. It continuously perfected itself, yet would never become equal to that which it imitated.

In Plotinus' philosophy, this region of the soul which most resembled God and could become an image in unison with the Intellect was designated with the term *nous*. Augustine used various terms to circumscribe the image of God as intellect. In *Gen. litt*, he referred to it as the rational soul, corresponding to the same in *De Ideis*. This part of the mind *mens* was also the *intellectus*. In *Gen. litt*, he designated the individual soul (*anima, animus*) by the term *ratio*, which likewise globally referred to the rational soul, the image of God, the intellect.⁷⁶ Thus Augustine's epistemology began in *Gen. litt*, founded on the conception of the *mens, intellectus* as the image of God in its capacity to obtain divine knowledge. In *Trin.*, he constructed his doctrine onto this framework and brought significant differentiations into his terminology of the rational soul in order to sharpen his definition of the image of God. This resulted in an epistemology resembling more that of Plotinus'. This will be given here in short and schematic form, as these points will be treated in more detail in the upcoming subsections. Plotinus designated the individual soul as a *logos*; the rational soul, the *logistikon*, the latter of which comprised the regions of the *logos* and the *nous*.⁷⁷ The *logos* or self-consciousness involved the capacity to process sense data from the environment. Its mode of cognition was discursive and served as a middle point between sense perception and the higher understanding of the intellect.

In Augustine's later development of the image of God in *Trin*, in his analysis of the trinitarian human mind, he distinguished two regions in the rational soul;⁷⁸ the lower from the higher mind, *ratio inferior* and *superior*, to which two kinds of knowledge, *scientia* and *sapientia* and two kinds of self-knowledge corresponded. Augustine's *ratio*, in designating the individual human soul, was equivalent to Plotinus' *logos*. Furthermore, Augustine's *ratio/intellectus* corresponded exactly to Plotinus' *logos/nous*. The image of God for both is the intellect; for Augustine, characterized by the *ratio superior, sapientia* and *se nosse* which entailed an immediate, intuitive self-awareness.⁷⁹ Additionally, both thinkers differentiated in the rational soul different selves,⁸⁰ advocating the gradual minimization of the lower in order to become the higher, more pure one, which was necessary in order to know God.

As pointed out in the previous section (2.iii) on the Godhead, the teachings of both thinkers proposed a special relationship of the human image of God-intellect with the second divine Person or Hypostasis. In both theological systems, the second divine Person had a close relationship with its

75 *Gen. litt* III.20.30-32.

76 e.g.: *Gen. litt*. VI.9.16, 14.25. 19.30 and VII.22.32. Also translated as 'causal formula' (Hill) or 'causal principle' (Taylor).

77 Treated in Chapter III.3.iii. The soul as *logos*: *Enn.* e.g.: IV.3.5.10-end and IV.3.8.17-20. The differentiations of the functions *dianoëtikon* and *noësis* are treated extensively in *Enn.* V.3 and throughout the *Enneads*.

78 Treated in Chapter V.3.iii.b. and f.; throughout *Trin.* XII and XIII.

79 *Se nosse* was treated in Chapter V.3.iii.b.: it is a term designating a higher form of self-knowledge from *Trin.* X.4.6, contrasted by *cogitatio sui*, self-knowledge by discursive thinking.

80 Treated in Chapter III.3.iii. (Plotinus) and Chapter V.3.iii.e. (Augustine).

'Father'-the primary divine Person or Hypostasis. In *Gen. litt.*, Augustine delineated the relationship of the intellect-image of God to the Creator, *Verbum Dei* (III.20.30). In expanding his doctrine of the image of God in *Trin.*, he demonstrated how the intellect could in some way reflect the three divine Persons with the assistance of and in imitation of the second Person, who was a perfect image of the first, the Father (See Chapter V.1.ii.). In doing so, his doctrine likewise came to resemble more that of Plotinus. Plotinus' delineation consisted of the human soul as image of the three regions of the All-Soul and the subsequent possibility of the soul reflecting the second Hypostasis, Intellect, on the condition that she actualized her highest region, the intellect. The soul became an image of the Intellect by imitating the relationship of the second divine Hypostasis to the first. In full actualization of the intellect, the human soul would become a more perfect image of the Intellect and then (if possible) an image of the One. Hence, Augustine's illustration of the imaging relationship of the intellect to the three divine Persons in *Trin.*, was likely inspired by the Plotinian model of imaging in the soul. Yet his method and strategy of demonstrating the imaging with triads differed considerably from that of Plotinus. These aspects of imaging will return to the analysis in this section under 'Differences' (iii.b). As a last note, it is of interest to point out that in Plotinus' philosophy there existed no perfect image of the model. Augustine gave one example of a perfect image: the Son, *Verbum Dei*, Christ, who was equal to the Father.⁸¹

3.i.b. Definition of the term 'Intellect'

Now we will proceed to the common characteristics in Augustine's doctrine of *imago Dei/Trinitatis* and in Plotinus' doctrine of the intellect-image,⁸² starting with the most general ones. The intellect was the most illuminated part of the mind, turned upwards to contemplate its divine source. This consisted of a rise in consciousness from discursive thinking in order to grasp the upper intelligible regions of divine reality. Both doctrines of intellect were consequently strongly allied to a specific theology. The most important similarity the intellect shared with God and the divine was its sheer immateriality.⁸³ Its consciousness existed above the ordinary daily mode of awareness which thrived on exterior intramental pictures.⁸⁴ Although Augustine accentuated that the image of God was an image of the human Incarnation of the *Verbum Dei*,⁸⁵ he nonetheless maintained that the image of God was immaterial. For both thinkers, the intellect was the only region in the soul where participation with God was possible. The intellect possessed the capacity to contemplate itself, the Ideas of God, the second Person in which the Ideas existed or the whole triune Godhead.⁸⁶ The activity of contemplating the Ideas in both thinkers was constitutive of the ascent to God. The differences between their perspectives concerning contemplating the Ideas in the context of the

81 As discussed in Chapter V.3.iii.c., Augustine did in fact speak of perfect imaging in the context of inner truth and self-knowledge, in the sense that the *verbum* was a perfect image of the *mens* (*Trin.* IX.11.16). This construction was deployed to create a parallel to the *Verbum Dei* being a perfect image of God the Father. However it was clear in this context that Augustine did not mean that the human *verbum* possessed perfect universal or divine knowledge. 'Perfect imaging' here was merely relative to the content of the human mind.

82 These were introduced in Chapter III.3.iii. ('The Human Soul as Image'); Chapter IV.3.ii.a. ('The *Imago Dei* as Intellect') and IV.3.iii. ('Synthesis'); in Chapter V.1.ii. ('The Treatment of *Imago Dei* in *Trin.* compared to *Gen. litt.*') and in V.3.iii.h. ('Synthesis: *Imago Trinitatis*, Intellect and Epistemology').

83 e.g.: Plotinus: *Enn.* I.2.3.19; Augustine: *Gen. litt.* III.20.30, *Trin.* i.e.: VII.6.10-VIII.2.3; XII.7.10.

84 Augustine: *Gen. litt.* III.20.30, *Trin.* i.e.: I.1.3; Plotinus: *Enn.* i.e.: II.9.2; See also the extensive discussion on this topic in Chapter V.3.ii.f ('Remarks on the two elements love and knowledge').

85 e.g.: *Trin.* VII.3.5; Treated in Chapter V.2.iv. ['The Son (Word) Christ as Perfect Image of the Father'].

86 Treated in: Plotinus-Chapter III.4. iii. ('Ascent'- 'The Contemplation of Ideas and Self-Knowledge', 'The Human Soul-Nous'); Augustine: Chapter IV.4.ii. ('Contemplation of Ideas'-*De Ideis*, and iii. '*Visio Intellectualis*' -*Gen. litt.* XII) and Chapter V.4.ii. ('The Ascent'- 'Summaries'- 'Epistemological Ascent').

ascent will be treated in section 5. This section here will deal with contemplation as a mental activity in itself and as related to intellectual vision and epistemology. Contemplation or intellectual vision entailed a temporary removal from corporeality and the material world: it was what endowed the image of God with a certain 'otherworldliness' as it was directed to the higher world of the divine.⁸⁷ The intellect was for both thinkers a state of mind which involved intuitive, immediate and sometimes extraordinary, divine vision.⁸⁸ The assertion of the immateriality of the intellect demanded that it only be involved with immaterial substances or non-representational content. The soul desired the actualization of its intellect. In order to unfold its true potential it was necessary for the soul to consciously differentiate between its state of mind *intellectus* or *nous* and the discursive mode of thinking. The latter was incorporated in the *ratio* or *logos*, operating with images from the material world derived from sense perception. These topics will be studied closer below. The intellect on the other hand obtained universal or divine knowledge by its receptivity to the Light from the invisible and transcendent world of the Godhead. The activities of understanding and acquiring knowledge in Augustine and Plotinus were associated with obtaining divine knowledge which led to redemption. They involved the assimilation of new consciousness on the road of evolution in resembling the Being of God.

3.ii. Epistemology

3.ii.a. Introduction

Now with the basic similarities of image and intellect in mind, we can proceed to a deeper comparison. As in the section on the Godhead, it is more practical to review all the similarities first, then treat the differences in a broader context. This section will begin with the material in *Gen. litt.* (from Chapter IV) and then proceed to *Trin.* (Chapter V). In the latter, Augustine's epistemology will be construed by extracting certain elements from his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* in order to facilitate the comparison with Plotinus' teaching on knowledge. The topics to be treated in the upcoming section ii. are: contemplation (ii.b.), in which elements of Plotinus' *theôria* will be underlined in Augustine's depiction of *conversio, illuminatio and formatio* from *Gen. litt.* III.20-31; Augustine's theory of intellectual vision and the characteristics of the intellect discussed alongside their Plotinian counterparts, which will also include how the intellect is equivalent to its own knowledge (ii.c.); the phenomenon of love and knowledge fused in the intellect (ii.d.); and differentiated types of self-knowledge (ii.e.). The last topic will deal with the conception of the lower and higher mind which reveals the way in which the soul acquires different types of knowledge and conveys various kinds of 'selves' (ii.f.).

3.ii.b. Contemplation

The first mention of contemplation in the context of Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Dei* in this study was in *Gen. litt.* III.20.30-31 (Chapter IV.3.ii.). There Augustine illustrated the movement of *conversio-illuminatio-formatio* of the pure beings of light and intellect in the heavenly realm, the *caelum*. Human souls inherently possessed the same formation process as the angels, by virtue of the origin of the human soul in that realm. This potential had thus been instilled in the human soul at

87 A good example of "otherworldliness" in Plotinus: *Enn.* I.8.6.10-13.

88 Plotinus: Chapter III.3.iii ('The Rational Soul *Logistikon-Logos* and *Nous*'); Augustine: Chapter IV.4.iii. ('Characteristics of *Visio Intellectualis*'), *Gen. litt.* XII.6.15 *et al*; Chapter V.3.ii.b. ('Augustine's Prelude to the Study of the Mind as *Imago Trinitatis*'), V.3.iii.b. ('Self-knowledge') and iii.h. ('Synthesis'). These characteristics are well integrated into both Plotinus' and Augustine's doctrines. It is sometimes difficult to supply references to passages or even a chapter in the primary sources where they are all included.

its creation. The formation process of the angels was as follows:⁸⁹ by being called back to the Creator by the Word himself, the angels turned (*conversio*) to the Light of their source to contemplate Him. In this illumination, they were able to ‘see’ thereby acquiring divine knowledge, their perfection or formation. This consisted of two important aspects: (i.) the awareness that the origin and cause of the world was a Divine Creator, and (ii.) the knowledge of the Ideas in the *mente divina*, or the intelligence by which the world was made, by having witnessed and contemplated the creation act themselves (*Gen. litt.* II.8.16-19). Augustine’s account of *conversio-illuminatio-formatio* here assumed the proper functioning of the will, which facilitated obtaining divine knowledge.⁹⁰ As such, the angels’ perfect contemplation of God and the complete divine knowledge of the Ideas served as a paradigm for the human soul.

The influence of Plotinus on Augustine’s doctrine of creation and on his depiction of the *caelum caeli* was illustrated in Chapter IV.⁹¹ It was shown there how Augustine’s notion of *caelum* resembled Plotinus’ depiction of the coming into existence of the *Nous* from the One and contemplating its source.⁹² As the *Nous* turned (*epistrophê*) to the One to contemplate his Father, it received its properties from the One (which included Light and Wisdom) which would complete its formation.⁹³ The contemplation of the source by turning, becoming illuminated and receiving formation was a movement repeated in the human intellect, which when turning to its source, the *Nous*, it contemplated the intelligible world of its divine model.

Contemplation of the Ideas by the human intellect was also discussed in the context of Augustine’s doctrine of creation in Chapter IV.4, initially in the essay *De Ideis-Div. Qu* 46. This essay shows much evidence of Plotinian influence.⁹⁴ G. O’Daly attributes the source for Augustine’s theory of forms here to Middle Platonism and claims: ‘It is important to note that in this text Augustine believes that it is Plato’s teaching that he is reporting: what he offers is Middle Platonic *Timaeus* exegesis.’⁹⁵

89 *Gen. litt.* I.3.7, 5.10, 9.15-17, 17.32; II.8.16-19; III.20.30-31; Chapter IV.3.ii.b. (‘The *Imago Dei* and the Angels’), iii. (‘Synthesis: Augustine’s Doctrine of the *Imago Dei*’ and ‘The Influence of Plotinus’).

90 *Gen. litt.* IV.23.40, 24.41 and 25.42; V.20.38; XII.35.68 and 36.69.

91 Chapter IV.3.iii.b. (‘The Influence of Plotinus’). Concerning the Plotinian influence on Augustine’s conception of *caelum caeli*: cf.: A. Solignac, «*Caelum Caeli*» in *BA* 14, 592-598. Solignac notes unambiguously a Plotinian influence of the second hypostasis *Nous* which is affirmed by the studies of Pépin and Armstrong (592-593).

92 Treated in Chapter III.4.ii.a. (‘The *Nous*’ Relationship to the One’). See also III.2.ii.b. (‘The Divine Intellect *Nous*’) and corresponding notes. *E.g.*: *Enn.* III.8.11.20 and VI.7.35.20-28.

93 Conversion and illumination in Plato’s and Plotinus’ doctrines was mentioned in *Civ. Dei* X.11. Plotinus: *i.e.*: *Enn.* I.2.4.15-16; V.1.7.5-6; V.2.1.9-13; V.3.8.24-25, 30-37; A. Solignac, «27. *Conversio, Formatio*», *BA* 14, 613-614; *ibid.*, «Origine plotinienne de l’idée ‘conversion’», 614-617; Vannier cites *Enn.* II.4.5.34; III.4.1.8-11, III.8.3.11 and III.8.4 as sources for Augustine’s *conversio*. [*Creatio, Conversio, Formatio chez Saint Augustin*, (Paradosis 31), (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires Fribourg, Suisse, 1991), 11-14].

94 J. Pépin, “*Quaestio De Ideis*, 117-134; Other sources are mentioned here as well, such as the Middle-Platonists; C. Pietsch only mentions Plato as source of Augustine (“Idea” in *AL*, vol. 3, Fasc. 5/6, 2008, 469-470). The problem with Plato as sole source for Augustine is that one overlooks the fact that Plato’s world of Ideas lie outside of the demiurge. Plotinus places them IN the demiurge, the *Nous*. Augustine follows Plotinus by positing that the eternal principles exist in God (the *Verbum Dei*); V. Boland devotes a whole chapter on Plotinus, thereby indirectly indicating the Plotinian influence on Augustine’s theory of Ideas. For the essay *Div. Qu.* 46 *De Ideis*, he discusses other sources such as Seneca and Cicero. Boland gives a summary of *Trin.* concentrating on the theme, the contemplation of Ideas [*Ideas in God According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, Source and Synthesis* (Leiden: Brill, 1995) 49-67; 70-77]; H. Meinhardt discusses the influence of Plato and Plotinus on Augustine and how Plotinus transformed Plato’s theory of Ideas [“Idee”, in: J. Ritter und K. Gründer (eds.) *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* Band 4: I-K; (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976) 55-65]. S.E. Beyers, “Augustine and the Philosophers” in: Mark Vessey (ed.), *A Companion to Augustine* (Chichester (UK): Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) 175-187, 180-184.

95 “Augustine and the Platonic Theory of Forms”, *Augustine’s Philosophy of Mind*, (London: Duckworth, 1987) 189-199; quote p. 193.

However O'Daly seems to be unaware of Pépin's study, which shows that many expressions in *De Ideis* can easily be traced to the *Enneads*. To name a few examples: the eternal Ideas existent in the Creator- as in the intelligible world of the Intellect,⁹⁶ "the mind's eye",⁹⁷ the Illumination of God⁹⁸ and the purification of the soul in order to see the Ideas. Further along, O'Daly writes: '*Neoplatonic theories of intellection and the form did not influence the structure of Augustine's theory, except in one important respect. His adaptation of the concept of hypostasis Nous (Mind) to his account of the status of the angelic order and its cognition, especially in its conversion to God qua truth, becomes the model for conversion of the human mind towards truth.*' (p. 195). O'Daly's comments about the influence of Plotinus on Augustine's notion of *conversio*, are of course accurate. However his position that Augustine was not influenced by Plotinus' conception of intellection can be refuted by examining Augustine's Trinitarian epistemology as well, which we will proceed to do in the upcoming sub-sections. There are indeed important differences between Augustine's and Plotinus' theories, which will be discussed here as well.

In *Gen. litt.*, contemplating the Ideas is mentioned in III.20-31, in his exegesis of Gen. 1.26-27, in reference to the angels in books I, II and IV, and especially in the latter part in book XII in the context of intellectual visions. Contemplating the Ideas is actually a process of the ascent to God and for that reason it will be treated there in section 4 ('The Epistemological Ascent in *Trin.*'). *Visio intellectualis* constitutes an ascent as well. Because it is of such importance to Augustine's epistemology in *Trin.*, it will be treated below in detail.

3.ii.c. Intellectual Vision

Augustine structuralized his conception of contemplation in his theory of three visions: corporeal, spiritual and intellectual vision from *Gen. litt.* XII (Chapter IV.4.iii). The three visions comprised an epistemological ascent which was parallel to the accounts of the epistemological ascent of Plotinus. The ascent will be taken more into consideration in section 5. What interests us now are the characteristics of the intellect which Augustine provided in his notion of *visio intellectualis*. The first of these were: the superiority of intellectual vision over spiritual vision (imaginary pictorial vision) and corporeal vision (sense perception) (*Gen. litt.* XII.11.22, 24.51). The superiority of the intellectual vision was substantiated by its infallibility (XII.14.29 and 30), by its capacity to judge the inferior visions and discern the truth from falsities or deception in corporeal and spiritual visions (XII.5.13), visions which were especially susceptible to error (XII.24.50). These same aspects were indicative of Plotinus' divine *Nous* and human *nous*. In the hypostasis *Nous*, the grasping of truth (itself: the Ideas) was perfect and immediate (Chapter III.3.iii). For the human *nous*, the judgment of material images in discerning their resemblance to their exemplar was derived from the sight of the Idea or Ideas, the object of contemplation and criteria (*Enn.* V.3.10-11, etc.). Intellectual vision according to Plotinus explicitly entailed the capacity to contemplate with a more complete understanding of the Ideas. It is evident here Plotinus' conception of intellection was well-nigh equivalent to Augustine's notion

96 Pépin ("Augustin, *Quaestio*") and Solignac believe that this aspect in Augustine could also have been from a Middle-Platonist source. A. Solignac suggests Albinus [«Analyse et sources de la Question *De Ideis*», in: *Augustinus Magister. Congrès International Augustinien*, Paris, 21-24 Septembre 1954, Communications, Études Augustiniennes, Paris, (307-315)] Also Philo as source has been suggested by J.A. Beckaert [*BA* 10: No. 46: 123-129) 726-727].

97 See also F. van Fleteren, "*Acies mentis*" in *AttA*, 5-6. Van Fleteren indicates that the term *acies mentis* 'the gaze of the mind' (LZ: which involves intellectual vision), is not only found in Plotinus, but also in Plato, Cicero, Porphyry and Marius Victorinus.

98 R. Nash, "Divine Illumination"; *AttA*, 438-440 and *The Light of the Mind: St. Augustine's Theory of Knowledge*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1969) 3-7. In the latter work, Nash points to Plotinus as the main source but discusses also Plato and Porphyry.; Schumacher, *Divine Illumination*, *ibid*, "Theo-logic".

of the perfect intellectual vision which was the constant activity of the angels. Their knowledge acquired from the *Verbum Dei* in the first phase of the creation act was non-inferential, intuitive and immediate: a simultaneous grasp of the whole of reality.⁹⁹ These characteristics pertained to both Plotinus' and Augustine's intellectual vision, the experience of such on the human level. Another aspect of Augustine's notion of intellectual vision was that it was impenetrable by demons or evil (*Gen. litt* XII.17.34). When Augustine formulated this facet, he may have had his criticism of Platonist-theurgists in mind who believed in the need of benevolent demons as intermediaries (*Civ. Dei* IX.10, 17, etc.). Yet this aspect, as well as the aspect of infallibility (*Gen. litt* XII.14.29), corresponded more precisely to Plotinus' view of intellect which was not only infallible but sinless, because of its absence of material images and its orientation to true, divine reality. Another characteristic of Augustine's *visio intellectualis* was its potential for visions of God and beatitude (*Gen. litt* XII.26.54 or 27.55) as was incorporated in Plotinus' depiction as well, for instance in the intellect's vision of the awesome beauty of the intelligible world (e.g.: *Enn.* VI.7.22.1-10). For Augustine, intellectual vision entailed the deeper understanding of all other modes of perception and as such grasped their true significance. The consciousness of Plotinus' intellect was likewise. It included the qualifications of being non-propositional, non-representational and in some cases, non-temporal (*Enn.* IV.7.10).

As regards the issue of Augustine's source, the following aspect of intellectual vision is particularly revealing: *intellectualis* is equivalent to *intelligibilis* (*Gen. litt* XII.10.21).¹⁰⁰ Intellectual vision or the intellect itself bore an inseparable affinity to the perception and understanding of the intelligible Ideas. This aspect demonstrates clear correspondences to Plotinus' often depicted phenomenon at the level of the divine Intellect: its self-knowledge obtained by contemplating its own Ideas, the perfect union with its intelligibles, in which the knower and known, the subject and its object, as well as the seer and the seen were one and equal. (See *Enn.* V.3.10.10-17 in note 100). The perception of material images did not achieve such a union, because these images were exterior to the *Nous* and the Ideas were always interior. Material images as 'phantoms' of the Ideas could not result in a direct unity of the knower with the known, because these images did not produce truth.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, in the *Nous* discursive thought was not possible, seeing that this mode of thinking was likewise bound to physical images and the domain of the *Nous* was entirely immaterial (See Chapter III.4.ii.b.). (See

99 Treated here in Chapter IV.2.ii.b.; *Gen. litt* IV.28-45-33.51.

100 *Gen. litt* XII.10.21: 'But the intellectual type of vision, which is proper to the mind, is on a higher plane. The word "intellect" so far as I know, cannot be used in a wide variety of meanings, such as we found in the case of the word "spirit". But whether we say "intellectual" or "intelligible", we mean one and the same thing, though some have wished to make a distinction between the two, designating as intelligible that reality which can be perceived by the intellect alone, and as intellectual the mind which understands. But whether there exists any being perceivable by the intellect alone but not itself endowed with intellect-this is a large and difficult question. On the other hand, I do not believe there is anyone who either thinks or says that there exists a thing which perceives with the intellect and is at the same time incapable of being perceived by the intellect. **For mind is not seen except by mind. Therefore, since it can be seen, it is intelligible, and since it can also see, it is intellectual**, according to the distinction just mentioned. Putting aside, then, the extremely difficult question about a thing which would only be understood but not possess understanding, we here use "intellectual" and "intelligible" in the same sense.' (Taylor). Compare Augustine's aspects of the intellect "seeing" the intelligible to Plotinus' assertions of the unity of the seer and the seen in Intellect: '...this Intellect needs to see itself, or rather to possess the seeing of itself, first because it is multiple and then because it belongs to another, and must necessarily be a seer, and a seer of that other, and its seeing is its substance; for the existence of something else is a necessary condition of seeing, if there is nothing else seeing, (it) is useless. There must, then, be more than one, that seeing must exist, and the seeing and the seen must coincide, and what is seen by itself must be a universal multiplicity.' (*Enn.* V.3.10-17).

101 Augustine refers to this in *Gen. litt* XII.7.15. 'The third kind of vision by which we see and understand love, embraces those objects which have no images resembling them which are not identical with them.' (Taylor) Accordingly, the intellect cannot be equal to corporeal images.

also note 137 in Chapter IV for sources of other studies on the identification of the intellect with the intelligible.) The human intellect will also achieve a certain sense of unity when contemplating the Ideas: ‘...let the man who has stripped look at himself and believe himself to be immortal, when he looks at himself as he has come to be in the intelligible and pure. For he will see an intellect, which sees nothing perceived by the senses, none of these mortal things, but apprehends the eternal by its eternity, and all the things in the intelligible world, having become itself an intelligible universe full of light, illuminated from the truth from the Good.’ (Enn. IV.7.10.30-37).¹⁰² Pépin¹⁰³ discovered these correspondences particularly concentrated in two main treatises in the *Enn.*: V.3.1-9 and V.5.1-2.¹⁰⁴

M. Wisse attempts to prove in his chapter on Epistemology in his evaluation of Augustine and Plotinus, that ‘the main innovative element of Augustine’s theory of truth and knowledge is that it breaks with the old adage of to know is to be identified with its objects of knowledge.’¹⁰⁵ He argues that Augustine’s doctrine of creation leads to a stronger distinction between the transcendent than in the Platonic tradition. This statement is only partially true as we will see in the discussions on the ascent (in the context of contemplation of the Ideas, section 5.iv. and vi.c.). Yet Wisse’s argumentation here is flawed because he applies this adage to Augustine’s conception of sense perception in *Trin.* XI in which *intellectualis-intelligibilis* is not in the least applicable. Material images deriving from sense perception are for Augustine as well “phantoms” of the Ideas, and therefore in the perception of such, no union of the intellect and the intelligible is ever possible.¹⁰⁶ The identification of the intellect with the intelligibles applies in particular to self-knowledge in *Trin.* X.4.6,

102 This is a fine example of Plotinus’ paradoxical thinking. Does he mean here that the human intellect, as image of the *Nous*, will attain a similar kind of self-unity which exists in the *Nous*? Or does he mean that the human intellect will attain a glimpse of the self-unity of the *Nous* by means of a momentary experience of being one with the *Nous*? These questions are related to the discussions in this chapter in: 3.iii.f. and h. and 5.v.b. on Plotinus’ depiction of the intellect as divine.

103 J. Pépin, «Une curieuse déclaration», 183-210. In this in-depth study on Augustine’s use of *intellectualis-intelligibilis* (and other aspects of intellectual vision), Pépin analyzes texts of Augustine (i.e. *Gen. litt* XII. 10.21 and other from *Trin.* IX-X) alongside those from the *Enneads*. Agaësse-Solignac, BA 49, «‘Intellectuel’ et ‘intelligible’» (II. 566-568). Ayres discusses the scholarly debate on Plotinus or Porphyry concerning Augustine’s *intellectualis-intelligibilis* from *Gen. litt* XII.10.21. Ayres comments: ‘Little has been added since publication of this note (LZ: publication cited above from BA 49) in 1972.’ *Augustine and the Trinity*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2010), 150 note 29.

104 The following is a brief inventory of Pépin’s findings: Augustine: the evidence of intellectual knowledge, the infallibility of the intellect, the absurdity of not knowing oneself (as in *Trin.* IX.3.3); the immediate nature of intellectual knowledge (*Gen. litt* XII.26.54) and self-knowledge as the trait of the intellect (*Gen. litt* XII.24.50); compared to Plotinus: (*Enn.* V.3.2.16-17, V.3.3.17-18); knowledge of oneself, Augustine: (*Trin.* X.3.5) compared to Plotinus: *Enn.* II.9.1. and V.3.1.22-27; the co-extension of knowledge to the intellect (*Trin.* IX.4.4. and *Gen. litt* VII.2.1.28) to Plotinus: (*Enn.* V.3.1.5-11, V.3.5.1-14; 1.21-22; V.3.6.7-8); *intellectualis* as the equivalent to *intelligibilis*: Augustine: (*Gen. litt* XII.10.21) to Plotinus: the reality or fiction of sense objects, indirect nature of spiritual knowledge, the necessity of judgment by the intellect [*Enn.* V.5.1 (esp. 1.32-38) and V.5.2; V.3.5.21-44 and II.9.1.46-47].

105 *Participation*, 229-235.

106 Wisse is likely correct in his observation on page 229 on the difference between Augustine and Plotinus concerning sense perception, in that Plotinus states that material images have no effect on the soul (*Enn.* IV.4.5-6, 23 and 6.1) in contrast to Augustine’s *Trin.* XI. On the other hand, Wisse fails to see that both thinkers posit that images based upon sense perception produce worldly knowledge (*scientia*) which both Augustine and Plotinus distinguish from true knowledge. Thus Wisse’s conclusion that Augustine accounts for this sense-based knowledge as true and reliable is fundamentally incorrect. (Nb: This would only apply to the Scriptures which were for Augustine *scientia*, yet nonetheless a source of true *sapientia*, divine knowledge.) Both Augustine and Plotinus posited that these images led to a false sense of self. Wisse’s studies on Plotinus also fail to take account for Plotinus’ statements on memory and will. Indeed, the latter are not as pronounced as in Augustine, as Wisse correctly assumes, yet Wisse overlooks the similarities in Augustine’s and Plotinus’ thinking. He exclusively takes into consideration Plotinus’ conception of remembering the Ideas between reincarnations. His comment on page 232 that in Plotinus, there is little place for the will and little attention for the role of creativity of soul, is incorrect and wholly unjustified.

in the understanding of the immaterial mind equal to its (immaterial) intelligible objects. This will be treated in point 3.ii.e.

3.ii.d. Love and Knowledge Fused in the Intellect

The collaboration of elements which Augustine deemed as the best image of God in *Trin.* VIII-X were: mind, knowledge and love, which he gradually developed to the activity of remembering God, understanding God and willing or loving God. Augustine's fusion of love and knowledge in the intellect corresponds to two general characteristics from the *Enneads*: the first is the importance of experiencing love and desire which will lead to truth and wisdom and will open up the way to God (for example in *Enn.* V.9). The second concerns knowledge and love as immaterial substances of the mind (treated in Chapter III.4.ii.a) in the context of divine Being in the *Nous*.¹⁰⁷

Yet the fusion of love and knowledge in Augustine's doctrine corresponds more specifically to Plotinus' representation of the divine Intellect's relationship with the One.¹⁰⁸ When the *Nous* came into existence from the One, it was in its inchoate stage -the 'desiring *Nous*' or 'unformed sight'. Longing to learn of its origin, it turned to contemplate the One (*Enn.* V.3.10, etc.). The *Nous*, in love with its source, received the properties from the One which rendered the Intellect its formation. The Intellect became Being and Thought, as such, unformed sight became seeing, while contemplating itself, its own world of Ideas. Plotinus assumedly believed that the human intellect mirrored the initial development of the Intellect. In this sense, the human soul in its intellectual mode of consciousness was characterized by loving and desiring its origin. Love and desire co-existed in higher thought and knowledge. Yet in Augustine's conception of self-knowledge, the fusion of love and knowledge was more conspicuous than in Plotinus' epistemological treatises. The aspect of desire leading to knowledge will be treated in section 4.

3.ii.e. Self-knowledge

Augustine began his exposition on self-knowledge in *Trin.* IX and X with the Socratic adage 'Know yourself'. Knowing oneself in Augustine's treatment included two modes of thinking: *se nosse* and *se cogitare*. *Se nosse*, as we recall (*Trin.* X.4.6) was an intuitive, a priori knowledge, (thus more pertaining to the intellect) and *se cogitare* (*Trin.* X.5.7), included the recognition of the details of one's person: the soul and body, a self-knowledge much in the same sense as *scientia*. Augustine also demonstrated in this context how self-knowledge was fused with self-love and desire: the mind's longing for self-knowledge and knowledge of God, treated with a lengthy series of contemplative exercises. The element love also played an instrumental role in the mind's approbation (as in loving) personal individual truth (a *verbum*) and in doing so, it adhered knowledge to the mind.¹⁰⁹

Augustine portrayed the acquisition of self-knowledge as being dependent on a relationship with God and on acquiring God's knowledge.¹¹⁰ The concept of *se nosse* in *Trin.*, bearing the characteristic of the intellect equaling its intelligible knowledge, as we have already acknowledged, corresponded

107 Ayres comments: 'One might draw parallels with Plotinus' account of the substantive existence of some "qualities" in the One (from *Enn.* II.6.1).' (*Trinity*, 295, note 50). However, Ayres might be mistaken here in assuming Plotinus' association of substance with the One. Generally Plotinus claims that the One is beyond substance.

108 On which treatises Augustine may have used, Ayres' states: 'At *Trinity* IX.4.5, Augustine argues that knowledge and love have substantial existence in the mind while also being one. This assertion may echo Plotinus' assertion in *Enneads* V.3, that in the necessary multiplicity of self-thinking *Nous* there are a number of activities, all of which are *ousiai*.' (*Trinity*, 295)

109 Treated in Chapter V.3.iii.c.; e.g. *Trin.* VIII.6.9.

110 See Chapter V, note 112.

to various aspects in Plotinus' notion of intellect, noted clearly in Plotinus' description of the soul's contemplation of the Ideas of the Intellect. Below are some examples:

AUGUSTINE: *How will it see to act on the command it hears "Know thyself", if it does not know what "know" is or what "thyself" is? If however it knows both, then it knows itself...But when the mind is told "Know thyself" it knows itself the very moment it understands what "thyself" is, and for no other reason than that it is present to itself. (Trin. X.9.12)*

PLOTINUS: *For thinking is a fine thing for us, because the soul needs to possess intellect, and for Intellect, because its being is the same as thinking, and thinking made it; therefore this Intellect needs to keep company with thinking and to be always getting an intimate understanding of itself...(Enn. VI.7.41.18-20). Since also "Know yourself" (Gnôthi sauton) is said to those who, because of their selves' multiplicity, have the business of counting themselves up and learning that they do not know all of the number and kind of things they are, or do not know any one of them, not what their ruling principle is or by what they are themselves. (Enn. VI.7.41.22-26)*

Here in the context of 'Know yourself', Plotinus is giving an example of what is not true self-knowledge; this corresponds to Augustine's *se cogitare*: a self-knowledge based upon material images and discursive thinking. Just as Plotinus relays the vast multiplicity of the mind here which cannot be counted and therefore cannot be true, Augustine says in *Trin.* XI.8.12 that the number of possible mental trinities involving material data recorded in the memory are practically infinite.

On a similar train of thought, both Augustine and Plotinus argued against the notion of self-knowledge of only one part of the mind (against the contentions of Sextus Empiricus).¹¹¹ There are a number of interesting similarities to note in the following passages:

AUGUSTINE: *But where in this case does it know its knowing, if it does not know itself? (ubi ergo nosse suum novit, si se non novit?) Well, it knows that it knows other things, but does not know itself: thus it also knows what knowing is. How comes it then that a mind which does not know itself, knows itself knowing something else? It is not that it knows another mind knowing, but itself knowing. Therefore it knows itself (jam se ergo novit). And then when it seeks to know itself, it already knows itself seeking. So it already knows itself. It follows then that it simply cannot know itself, since by the very fact of knowing itself not knowing, it knows itself. (LZ: Augustine is pointing to a paradox here.) If it did not know itself not knowing, it would seek to know itself (si autem se nescientem nesciat, non se quaerit ut sciat). For it knows itself seeking and not knowing, while it seeks to know itself.*

6. *What are we to say then? That the mind knows itself (se novit) in part and does not know itself in part? But it is absurd to say that the whole of it does not know what it knows (non eam totam scire quod scit): I am not saying: 'It knows the whole' but 'What it knows, the whole of it knows.' And so when it knows, which only the whole of it can do, it knows its whole self. For it knows itself knowing something and only the whole of it can know something: so it knows the whole of itself (scit se igitur totam). (Trin. X.4.5-6)*

111 Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos*, VII.284-286, 310-312; from Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 26-27. This topic is discussed plentifully in secondary literature.

PLOTINUS: *Does he (LZ: Intellect) then see himself with another part of himself? But in this way one would be the seer, and the other would be then seen; but this is not "self-knowledge" (Enn. V.3.5.1-2) ...For by thus seeing that part of himself which is the same as himself, he sees himself: for the seer does not differ in any way in reference to the seen. First of all, **the division of itself in parts is absurd: for how will it divide** ...The one who sets himself on the contemplating or on the contemplated side? Then, how will the contemplator know himself in the contemplated when he has set himself on the contemplated side? For contemplating is not the contemplated. Knowing himself in this way, (ê gnous eauton) he will know himself as contemplated but not as contemplating; so that **he will not know himself completely or as a whole**; for what he saw, he saw as contemplated but not as contemplating; so he will have been seeing another, but not himself. Or perhaps he will add from himself the one who has contemplated, **in order that he may have perfect knowledge of himself** (ê nenoêkôs). But if he adds the one who has contemplated, he at the same time adds what he sees. (Enn. V.3.5.6-20)*

In the passages above, both authors, exploring various perspectives on self-knowledge, write off the notion of self-knowledge as possible in only a part of one's intellect as absurd. Augustine utilizes the argument that 'not-knowing' is also a form of self-knowledge, while Plotinus accentuates that splitting apart the seer from the seen or the contemplator from its contemplation is untenable (ridiculing this idea by exploring its impossibility). Augustine argues that the mind can only know itself as a whole which is consistent with the same train of thought in the quotes of Plotinus above. Plotinus repeats these in the continuation of *Enn. V.3* (5.29-end), explaining how the Intellect and the intelligible are one: *'it thinks as a whole with the whole of itself.'* (V.3.6.8). In Intellect, the knowing subject is equal to its object; this is perfect self-knowledge. Self-knowledge could never be perfected if the mind were divided.¹¹²

There are many other examples demonstrating the correspondences in Augustine and Plotinus' conceptions of self-knowledge, such as the classic one made famous by Descartes involving Augustine's claim that the mere fact that we think is a proof of our existence in *Trin. X.4.6*. This, in fact, originated in Plotinus: *Enn. V.3.13.24-end, etc.*. But instead of dwelling on this, we will proceed further.

Researchers such as Pépin,¹¹³ Brachtendorf, Horn,¹¹⁴ Cary, Taylor¹¹⁵ and Ayres (notes 100 and 104) have recognized a clear parallel between Plotinus' theory of self-knowledge and Augustine's

112 See Chapter III.4.iv: here the passage *Enn. V.9.8.18-end* is discussed regarding the dividing and undivided Intellect. There it was established that the term 'undivided intellect' could only apply to the divine *Nous* and that the 'dividing intellect' to the human mind, due to its fragmented and temporal thought processes. Thus in the quote above, Plotinus seems to be speaking in the context of the divine Intellect. This would prove consistent with his statements in V.9.8.18-end.

113 Pépin: («Connaissance»: *'Tout le monde, je présume, est aujourd'hui d'accord pour estimer que les célèbres analyses d'Augustin sur la connaissance de soi sont redevables, au moins pour une part, à la inspiration néoplatonicienne, notamment plotinienne.'* «Le tout et les parties dans la connaissance de la *mêns* par elle-même (*De Trin. X.3,5-4,6*)" in: Brachtendorf, Gott, *Bild*, 105-126, 108. 'Les éditeurs de Plotin sont unanimes à observer que ce philosophe est à l'origine de différents traités du *De Trinitate*, notamment dans les livres IX-X; ils invoquent à cet égard plus qu'aucun autre, le traité plotinien V.3 (49) *Sur les hypostases qui connaissent.'* (*ibid*, 112)

114 Brachtendorf and Horn treat the Plotinian influence of self-knowledge in these books and articulate this most clearly. Brachtendorf demonstrates these correspondences with treatise V.3: (*On the Knowing Hypostasis and that which is Beyond*). Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 24-55; C. Horn: "Selbstbezüglichkeit des Geistes bei Plotin und Augustin", in: Brachtendorf, Gott, *Bild*, 81-103, *ibid* "Augustine's Theory of mind and Self-Knowledge: Some Fundamental Problems" in: Bermon, O'Daly, *Trinitate*, 205-219.

115 C. Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 127-142.

treatments of knowledge in *Trin.* VIII-X. Scholarly literature is in general consensus concerning the influence of certain treatises of the *Enneads* to which Augustine is indebted, mainly V.I, V.3 and V.5. Because of the consensus, the correspondences between Augustine's and Plotinus' self-knowledge will not be further pursued here. The similarities are already evident enough, in light of countless examples in Augustine's *imago Dei/Trinitatis* and Plotinus' *nous*. The table of both thinkers' epistemologies on the following page will display the correspondences more clearly. This is the fruit of this present study, which maps out the correspondences in a complied manner and thus more clearly.

There are however a number of points in the scholarly literature which require correction. In discussing Augustine's indebtedness to Plotinus in positing that self-knowledge as a condition for the knowledge of God, Brachtendorf¹¹⁶ correctly points out that this does not imply that Augustine advocates a direct and complete union of the human mind with the Ideas in the Word of God (or even with the Word of God himself) while contemplating, as was seemingly the case with Plotinus' *nous*. However Brachtendorf claims that Augustine's '*se nosse*' involved more of a propositional cognition of the structure and the abilities of the human soul in general. This is not true. As I see it, self-knowledge for Augustine may begin with propositional cognition as in an analytical conception of oneself, yet it will subsequently rise to the intellect, distancing oneself from false self-images (as those in *se cogitare*) and obtaining a more universal grasp of humanity and itself through its glimpse of the Ideas and Christ's illumination. In this sense we can infer that Augustine neatly depicted a rise from *cogitatio sui* to *notitia sui* -which in turn paralleled the rise from *scientia* to *sapientia*. Therefore, as I see it, Augustine's *se nosse* pur sang cannot entail propositional knowledge. Instead it involves an immediate understanding or intuition of itself that is proper to the intellect; as when Augustine claims that the mind is immediately present to itself. This is clearly demonstrable in the quotes provided in this section.¹¹⁷

Recalling Chapter III.4.iii.b., Plotinus depicted an intramental ascent from the *logos* to the *nous*. Yet in contemplating the Ideas, he seemed to depict an overlap between the discursive grasping the Ideas *dianoia* or *dianoêtikon* and the immediate, intuitive comprehension of *noêsis*. In this framework, Brachtendorf's second claim (that Augustine's *se nosse* entailed propositional knowledge) could in fact hold true for Plotinus. As often noted in Chapter III, Plotinus' accounts of the human intellect having the whole intelligible cosmos at its disposal appeared too idealistic. In practice, the soul would be engaged more often with contemplating the Ideas on the level of the discursive mode of thinking. Augustine's intellect in contemplation of the self and of the Ideas was in comparison more 'down to earth' and accessible than Plotinus' version, which Brachtendorf suggested in his conclusions above. This wholly had to do with Augustine's firm negation that the soul -not even the intellect- could be divine. As such, again it seems that Plotinus' account of the contemplation of the Ideas by the human intellect agreed more with Augustine's perfect angelic vision (although Augustine clearly stated that angels were not divine). This highly relevant point will be discussed again in the section 3.iii. below.

To return to Brachtendorf's second statement concerning the self-knowledge of Augustine's '*se nosse*', Pépin makes a similar erroneous estimation.¹¹⁸ He argues that the difference between Augustine's and Plotinus' conception of self-knowledge is that Augustine applied self-knowledge

116 *Struktur*, 37-38.

117 Brachtendorf seemed to have corrected his perspective in 2012 when this subject was again discussed in "Time, Memory and Selfhood in *De Trinitate*" in: Bermon, O'Daly, *Trinitate*, 221-233.

118 Pépin, "Connaissance", 106-108.

to the soul, Plotinus only to the intellect.¹¹⁹ Pépin's arguments are not feasible on account that Augustine, once again, in positing *se nosse*, was dealing primarily with the intellect and not the lower rational soul in his Trinitarian exploration. Pépin too seems to fail to take into account Augustine's differentiations between *se nosse* and *se cogitare* which parallel *scientia/sapientia*.

3.ii.f. The Higher and Lower Levels of the Mind, Science and Wisdom; the Lower and Higher Selves

Both Augustine and Plotinus divided the rational soul into two regions, the inferior and the superior. Knowledge was defined by both along the same lines: as two modes of thinking: Augustine: *scientia* and *sapientia*¹²⁰ and Plotinus: *dianoëtikon* and *noësis*, further distinguished by the human *logos* and *nous*, and two kinds of knowledge (Chapter III.3.iii.). Consequently both thinkers distinguished between the contemplation of the ideas by discursive reasoning and by intellectual vision in that the latter was as an immediate, intuitive grasping of truth. Let us now elaborate on this in more detail.

Augustine described higher and lower reason, *ratio superior* and *ratio inferior* in the following way: it was the task of higher reason to judge material things or internal material images according to immaterial eternal principles. This necessarily involved the contemplation of the unchangeable Ideas in the *Verbum Dei*. Lower reason managed and maintained things of matter, sense and time (*Trin.* XII.4.4). *Ratio superior* and *inferior* were as such complementary. Both were necessary for mental functioning, for acquisition of knowledge and wisdom. Trinities which Augustine found in the realm of *ratio inferior* did not attain the best imaging of the Holy Trinity. Only those in the superior of the two could qualify as pertaining to the *imago Dei* (*Trin.* XII.4.4; 7.10). Augustine's differentiation of lower and higher reason generally corresponded to his two types of knowledge, *scientia* and *sapientia* (*Trin.* XII.12.17). He described these two kinds of knowledge as in a kind of marriage between contemplation and action: wisdom pertained thus to contemplation, science to action (*Trin.* XII.12.19). The differentiation of *scientia* and *sapientia* along the same lines of *ratio inferior* and *superior* is illustrated in a general manner by the following citation:

If then this is the correct distinction between wisdom and knowledge, that wisdom is concerned with the intellectual cognizance of eternal things and knowledge with the rational cognizance of temporal things, it is not hard to decide which should be preferred and which subordinated to the other. Perhaps of course, some other distinction might be offered to tell the two apart by-for there can be no doubt that they do differ, seeing that we have the apostle's teaching "To one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit" (1 Cor.12:8). Yet even so, there is a manifest difference between the two things we have just mentioned, namely the intellectual cognizance of eternal things and rational cognizance of temporal things and no one has any hesitation about preferring the former to the latter.

So as then as we leave behind what belongs to outer man, and desire to climb up inward from what we have in common with beasts, before we come to the cognizance of intelligible things that are supreme and everlasting, we meet the rational cognizance of temporal things. Here too let us find some trinity if we can, just as we found one in the sensation of the body and another in the images that entered our soul or spirit through the senses, in such a way that for bodily things placed outside us which we attain with a bodily sense we have the likenesses of bodies inside impressed on the memory; and we have thought being formed from them with the will as the third

119 In doing so, he refers to the following chapters in *Enn.* V.3.: 1.16-17, 2.23-25, 3.14-18, 4.7-10 and 23-31.

120 *Trin.* XI-XIII; Chapter V.3.iii.f. –'Lower and Higher knowledge' and h. 'Synthesis'.

element joining the two together, just as on the outside the attention of the eyes was formed, with the will again presenting it to the visible object to produce sight and joining the two together, and here too coming in itself as third element. (Trin. XII.15.25)

However, the limits of Augustine's definitions of *scientia* and *sapientia* were not so strictly differentiated as *ratio superior* and *inferior*. *Scientia*, also necessary for the eternal life, constituted the reason-oriented attention which dealt with the physical environment, in order to form worldly knowledge and to improve one's mind and life. Yet unlike *sapientia*, *scientia* included negative potentials, for example, acquiring knowledge for the sake of status as a distraction from God. On the other hand, *scientia* was instrumental for acquiring virtues in order to live well (*Trin.* XII.13.21). Sagacity pertaining to science was focused on worldly matters. *Sapientia* was divine knowledge acquired by the *imago Trinitatis*. Unlike *scientia*, *sapientia* was directly obtained from Christ *Verbum*, who was divine Wisdom. *Sapientia* obtainable for humans seemed to be the higher counterpart of the human *verbum intimum*, which in order to evolve from pure self-knowledge to universal knowledge, likewise required the assistance of the *Verbum Dei*. *Scientia* was identified with Scripture, yet understanding scripture pertained to the function of the intellect, as in intellectual vision (a fine example of this is *Gen. litt* XII.11.22). *Sapientia* was also derived by contemplating the Ideas in the Word. In sum, the lower mind was involved with worldly knowledge based upon material images (*phantasiae*), derived by sense perception. These images, retained in the memory, were processed to knowledge (*cogitatio*). Judging them while contemplating their archetypal Forms to arrive at truth was carried out by the whole rational soul in order to attain *sapientia*.

Approximately the same differentiations were apparent in Plotinus' epistemology. '*The things which Intellect gives to the soul are near to truth; but those which the body receives are already images (eidôla) and imitations.*' (*Enn.* V.9.3.36-37). The individual soul-*logos*' capacity to reason *logismos* and to think discursively *dianoia* enables an understanding of things by analysis and synthesis. *Dianoia* (parallel to Augustine's term *cogitatio*) was a function which formed knowledge derived from visual images from the external world of *eidôla* which entered the soul through sense perception *aisthêsis* as representations of physical images *phantasiai* or *tupoi*. They were then stored in the memory (*mnêmê*) (*Enn.* V.3.3). The recovery of these images committed to memory had to do with an image-making faculty (*phantasia*, *phantastikon*, *phantazesthai*) (*Enn.* IV.4.3) or the imagination of the rational soul. The rational soul ordered or governed the material realm by bringing these 'types' before the *nous* in an act of judgment (*krinein*) -by contemplating the Ideas or the recollecting certain innate, archetypal intelligibles. Plotinus differentiated as such the accumulated knowledge based upon the *eidôla* as representational and propositional and characterized by temporality. '*What then prevents pure Intellect from being in soul?...We shall not say it (LZ: divine Intellect) belongs to soul, but we shall say that it is our intellect, being different from the reasoning part (dianooumenon) and having gone up on high, but all the same ours, ...for this reason we use it and do not use it, but we always use discursive reason (dianoia)— and it is ours when we use it, but not ours when we do not use it.*' (*Enn.* V.3.3.22-30).

Hence, according to Plotinus, contemplation of Ideas could be attained to some extent through discursive thought; the difference with *noêsis* was that this manner of contemplation encompassed an understanding in separate fractions, as in how one understands scientific theories and related concepts, but not the whole of the science. Plotinus also overlapped the two kinds of mode of thinking in regard to contemplating the Ideas, which sometimes made it difficult to distinguish them, (for example, throughout *Enn.* V.3). Plotinus demonstrated that the knowledge of the *logos*-soul was derived from the elaboration of sense data (*eidôla*); which differed from the immediate knowledge

by means of intellectual contemplation of the true Forms (*eidê*) themselves, which constituted true reality. The *Nous* illuminated the human intellect directly, enabling it to contemplate the Ideas. As is evident here, Augustine integrated these same concepts into his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis* in its encounters, affinity and relationship to the *Verbum Dei*. One point here for example which Augustine did not accept was Plato's theory of recollection, which was likewise assimilated by Plotinus, which he refuted in *Trin.* XII.15.24.

In addition, these modes of thought corresponded to a certain conception of oneself. The self in both thinkers was associated with perception and with what kind of knowledge could be obtained. There were various 'selves' mentioned (for instance in *Enn.* V.3.4). In Plotinus these 'selves' tended to follow with his conception of different kinds of images.¹²¹ It is significant that Plotinus' lower self was associated with material reality and physical sense perception. This corresponded to corporeal vision in Augustine's theory of hierarchically disposed three visions which was sheer physical sense perception (*Gen. litt* XII.2.3); as well as spiritual vision (*Gen. litt* XII.7.9), which involved recognizing the images from one's worldly experience retained in the mind or the memory. As such we can deduce here that the two lower visions evidently applied to ordinary daily consciousness, which included the activity of logical, discursive or analytical thinking of the rational soul. The higher of the two visions, the intellectual, in Plotinus and Augustine, encompassed the self-consciousness removed from bodily or worldly perceptions, regarded as a true self in that it was closer and directly oriented to God. The true self was where true imaging of God took place. For this reason it was deemed most appropriate to designate the image of God in both thinkers as a 'consciousness' involving not just the accumulation of true self-knowledge, but a simultaneous orientation to the divine and a capacity for higher understanding. The similarities of the main epistemological elements of both thinkers is illustrated in the table below.

121 Plotinus: treated in Chapter III.3.iii.; e.g.: *Enn.* V.3.1 whole chapter; III.9.3, III.9.6.7-end, III.9.8.7-13. / Augustine: in Chapter IV.3.iii; *Gen. litt* III.20-30 'the new man', e.g. *Trin.* VII.6.12. I am dealing with the subject 'self' here in a very general way. For a more thorough treatment of both authors see e.g.: R. Sorabji, *Self: Ancient and Modern Insights about Individuality, Life, and Death*, 2008; P. Remes, *Plotinus on Self, The Philosophy of the We* (Cambridge: University Press, 2007); L. Zwollo, "Prayer, Desire and the Image of God: Augustine's Longing for God in his 'Prayer to the Holy Trinity'", CPO Conference in Utrecht August 2014, forthcoming.

AUGUSTINE	PLOTINUS
<u>Self-knowledge:</u> <i>(verbum¹)</i> - <i>Se cogitare</i> Historical self - <i>Se nosse</i> True self - <u>Knowledge:</u> lower and higher <i>scientia/sapientia</i> - <u>Rational soul:</u> <i>ratio, mens</i> <i>Ratio inferior</i> <i>Homo exterior</i>	<u>Self-knowledge</u> <u>and knowledge:</u> -based upon images: <i>dianoia, dianoêtikon</i> -based upon Ideas: <i>noêsis</i> , <i>theôria</i> = true self - <u>Knowledge:</u> lower and higher <i>epistême, gnôsis</i> (terminology differentiated) - <u>Rational soul:</u> <i>logos, logistikon</i>

The crux of the matter here was the orientation or focus –the shift from oneself to God (by means of the will) in order to advance self-development. In Augustine, the shift of the intellect’s gaze depended upon the grace of the *Verbum Dei*, just as Plotinus depicted the dependence of the *nous* on the divine *Nous* (*Enn.* V.1.11.13-15, *etc.*). (However, Augustine postulated this dependence much further, as concluded in the section 2.viii.a. of this chapter, by formulating a doctrine of grace.) It was not clear whether Plotinus believed in a full actualization of the true self in this life. Considering his theory of reincarnation, it would seem plausible that he believed it would take several lives to accomplish this, although this was not specified in the *Enneads*. Augustine, on the other hand, expressed himself clearly on this point: the *imago Dei/Trinitatis* worked towards the new self in this life yet it was only in Christ’s re-formation in the afterlife that this perfected image would be acquired.¹²² In this sense, Augustine still followed Plotinus in the association of the image of God with the true self which required actualization and further evolution.

3.iii. Intellect-Image DIFFERENCES

3.iii.a. Introduction

Within the discussion of the similarities between Augustine’s and Plotinus’ conceptions of intellect above, many of the differences had to do primarily with how the two thinkers depicted the intellect in the ascent to God. These differences will be treated in section 5. This section will discuss the following points of difference: in Augustine’s human mental triads (b.), Augustine’s Christological orientation (c.), concerning faith, Scripture, revelation (d.), prayer (e.), and the divinity of the soul (f.-h.). Point iv. will provide a synthesis and conclusions of these comparisons.

3.iii.b. Augustine’s Human Mental Triads

The subject of the source of Augustine’s perusal of the mental triads in *Trin.* remains unresolved. This issue has been discussed in great length in a number of studies. Ayres’ response summarizes the

122 *i.e.*: *Gen. litt.* III.20.30; *Trin.* IV.3.5-6, VII.6.12, *etc.*

present situation of research on this topic: ‘while we may seek the substantial existence of knowledge and love on the basis of his engagement with Plotinus (or Aristotle) alone, it may be that Marius Victorinus (LZ: who described a triad in the human soul which imaged the Holy Trinity) provided Augustine with an important precedent for manipulating mental triads on the basis of Trinitarian theology.’¹²³ Yet in his other studies Ayres argued his conviction that the source was more likely Cicero.¹²⁴ Tornau, on the other hand, discusses the Plotinian-Aristotelian aspects at length.¹²⁵

Let us first briefly summarize the main points of Augustine’s triads and then look at the Plotinian similarities. In his search of the best triads involving the *imago Trinitatis*, Augustine discovered triads within the elements knowledge and love themselves as well (Chapter V.3.iii. and iv.). These triads also reflected in some way the procession of the Holy Trinity. This was exemplified in Augustine’s introduction of the first trinity in the human mind: the trinity of love: the lover, the beloved and becoming one in love itself (*Trin.* IX.2.2). The relationship of the lover to the beloved was as the Father loves the Son; love itself bound the first two elements of the triad, as in the Holy Spirit bound the Father to the Son. The most exemplary triad reflecting the Trinitarian procession can be found throughout book X, where Augustine dealt with the element knowledge in the context of self-knowledge: the relationship of the knower (subject) to what is known (object), in association with the mind’s self-consciousness (*memoria*) and the mind bringing forth truth (*verbum*) of itself. Self-knowledge was bound to the mind by love or will. Accordingly, Augustine drew a parallel with the knowledge which God possessed: the Father’s knowledge being equal to that of the Son, the Holy Spirit as equal and common to both (XV.13.22-16.26). This (too) was a complicated constellation, in which the terms, thinking and truth (*verbum*) were involved. Augustine then referred back to the self-knowledge of the *imago Trinitatis*, underlining the differences between the human and the divine. Another triad utilized by Augustine was Being, Understanding (Knowledge) and Life (*Trin.* XV.13.22), which not only characterized the divine but was present in the human mind as well (X.9.12).

The triad of love mentioned above as well as the triad of Being, Thought and Life also occurred in the *Enneads*, respectively in the self-love of the One and in self-knowledge of the Intellect.¹²⁶ However Plotinus rarely explicitly treated the human intellect using a triadic structure. The triad of knowledge *nous-noêsis-noêton* pertained predominantly to the self-knowledge of divine *Nous*.¹²⁷ The ‘trinity’ of Life-Being-Thought, the three major attributes of the divine Intellect, manifested in the *Nous*’ self-relationship with its Ideas in its self-contemplation. Plotinus implied that these aspects could be reflected in the human intellect and in particular in the corresponding activities of self-contemplation, acquiring self-knowledge or divine knowledge (as suggested in *Enn.* V.9.10.10-13). As such, by contemplating the Ideas, the soul participated in Life, Being, Thought (and Desire) at its highest level.

Plotinus’ triad of knowing *nous-noêsis-noêtikon*, describing the self-knowledge of the divine *Nous*, was detectable in *Trin.* IX and X in Augustine’s analysis of the mind acquiring self-knowledge and

123 Ayres, *Trinity*, 293-296, quote: p.296.

124 Ayres, *Trinity*, 308-312, *Passionate Intellect*, 287-292.

125 “The Background of Augustine’s Triadic Epistemology in *De Trinitate* 11-15. A Suggestion” in: Bermon, O’Daly *Trinitate*, 251-266.

126 Treated in Chapter III.4.v.a.; triad of love: *Enn.* VI.8.15.1-5. ‘And he (LZ: the One) that same self, is lovable and love and love of himself in that he is beautiful and from himself and in himself.’ Plotinus’ triad seems to be echoed in one of Augustine’s explications of triads in *Trin.* VIII.8.12 about love loving itself: ‘For when we love charity, we love her loving something, precisely because she does love something. What then, does charity love, that makes it possible for charity herself also to be loved?...so, too, charity certainly loves itself, but unless it loves itself loving something, it does not love itself as charity.’ This triad is also treated in this chapter in section 4.ii. and iii.

127 Treated in Chapter III.4.ii.b; triads of knowledge: e.g. *Enn.* V.3.5.44.

also in Augustine's shorter analysis of the self-referencing in the consciousness of God the Trinity.¹²⁸ Plotinus' triad Life, Thought and Being also appeared in Augustine's analysis of the Son in *Trin.* VI.10.11-12. The triad of love (the lover, beloved and love itself), an anchor point in *Trin.* VIII, was also found in *Enn.* VI.8.15.1-5 in the context of the self-love of the One (Chapter III.4.v.). (This was discussed already in the context of the Godhead in section 2.vi. of this chapter. The latter triad will be discussed again in section 4.ii.b. on Love-Image.) Thus, if Augustine had read much of the *Enneads*, it would not be unfeasible to claim that he (as well as Marius Victorinus) could have read these triads here, applying them -each in their own way- to the human mind. Seeing how influential Plotinus' epistemology already was on Augustine's doctrine of the image of God, this does not seem to be such a complicated issue.

Another additional point to mention here is that Augustine's use of the triad of love is an example of classical dialectic: the lover and the beloved served as two polarities resolving into love itself (*Trin.* VIII.10.14, 8.12). Love itself was for Augustine simply God, as in 'God is Love'. It is then of no coincidence, that the *Enneads* included a short treatise *On Dialectic* (*Enn.* I.3) in which descriptions of the intellect, as well as three different accounts of the ascent were expounded.¹²⁹ It is obvious that Augustine's intention was not to prove how these mental trinities follow along the lines of classical dialectic, rather how they reflect the same procession as the Holy Trinity. I would therefore assert that in *Trin.* Augustine 'bent' the classical dialectic to the Trinitarian procession.¹³⁰

To conclude, in light of the undeniably strong similarities between Augustine and Plotinus mentioned above, the fact that Plotinus did not explicitly utilize triads to describe the rational soul should not be considered as a major difference. This issue requires much deeper study which explores whether Plotinus was Augustine's sole source, or how exactly Plotinus fits into the constellation of other influences on Augustine, that is, the works of Marius Victorinus or Cicero. Included in this extensive task would be examining and evaluating the claims in scholarly literature. For these reasons, this point should be deemed a gray area in this study.

3.iii.c. Augustine's Christological Orientation

As Augustine emphasized in *Conf.* VII.9.13, that Platonism missed the Incarnation of the second Trinitarian person who served as Redeemer. In Plotinus' philosophy, the eternal Son-Word of God was indeed present. (Chapter II.1.ii.a.). In Augustine's epistemology, the Son-Word of God in his two natures played an active role: the story of his Incarnation in the person of Jesus of Nazareth as well as his active presence in his pre- and post-incarnational eternal countenance as Creator, as the Re-creator of souls and intermediary between the higher region of the human soul and God.¹³¹ Both Augustine and Plotinus highlighted the difficulties of the human soul and the inclination towards sin and belief in illusion which formed obstacles to attaining intellectual vision. Yet Augustine resolved these problems with his Christology, as Christ continued to heal the will, the heart, one's sinfulness. With Christ as intermediary, a soul was able to hold her focus longer on God. Together with the Holy Spirit, Christ brought those he touched to a contemplation of God the Father and the Trinity.

In Plotinus' depictions of intellectual vision and contemplation, there was no divine assistance taking place, although the attractive forces of the *Nous* in relationship to the One, the force of

128 *Trin.* XV.14.23, 21.40, 23.43; *Enn.* e.g.: V.3.5

129 One of these accounts illustrated three types of persons: the musician, the lover and the philosopher; the latter two involving respectively the ascent by love and knowledge (*Enn.* I.3.2-3).

130 H.-I. Marrou treats Augustine's utilization of Platonic or Plotinian dialectic in the context of spiritual exercises. *Augustine et la fin de la culture antique*, (Paris: 1983), 315-327, 327-note 1.

131 As was delineated in the section of this chapter on the Godhead (2.iii., and viii.a.) and in *Trin.* IV (e.g.: ch's 20 and 21).

beauty of the Ideas and *Erôs*, combined with the compelling upward movement of the *Logos* to the *Nous*, were indeed intramental forces which would drive the soul towards the divine. The human intellect depended wholly on the divine for its anchoring in itself and for its ascent.¹³² Yet the *Logos* and *Eros* were not intermediaries in the sense that they intervened in a person's consciousness. The relationship of Christ, the Perfect Image to the human images of God, described by Augustine, was a personal one, serving as guide in the soul's development in one's life on earth in the striving to understanding God. Augustine additionally underscored Christ's personal role in the development of the individual in his doctrine of grace.¹³³ (Augustine's doctrine of grace is a thematically more relevant to the account of the ascent. For this reason it is included in the discussions in section 5.v.a. of gray areas under 'Self-actualization'. In my view, the theme of divine grace makes up a part of the personal aspect of the Godhead in Augustine in association with divine assistance and intervention. For that reason, grace will not be treated in this study as an element in itself to be compared with some parallel notion in Plotinus.)

3.iii.d. Faith, Scripture, Revelation

Augustine integrated into his Plotinian epistemology the element of *intellectus fidei*.¹³⁴ One needed to first embrace certain rules of faith, such as the existence of the Holy Trinity or the Incarnation of the Word, and subsequently embrace what is taught in the Scriptures, as authority by divine revelation. Through contemplation, an understanding could be attained which replaced faith, by means of, among other things, the epistemological process of becoming conscious of divine insight through Christ's illumination (*Trin.* XIII.19.24).

Understanding by faith was certainly not alien to Plotinus.¹³⁵ He used the word *pistis* to designate 'assurance, belief or means of persuasion' or the verb *pisteuein* meaning to believe, trust and have confidence, or to trust in something convincing which appears true.¹³⁶ One passage in *Enn.* at least concerns belief of what one does not truly understand, in this case, the One, which is cited in the note below.¹³⁷ Plotinus mentions *pistis* in *Enn.* I.3.3: as 'to firm confidence in the existence of

132 *Enn.* e.g.: V.8.3.17, 10.23-26, 11 and 12; V.9.2.21-23, etc.

133 Fattal gives an exposition on the interaction of reason, faith, philosophy, freedom and grace in Augustine (*Plotin chez Augustine*, 37-39).

134 Treated in Chapter V.3.iii.g.; *Trin.* VIII.4.7; XII.5.8; XIII.1.2, 3.4, 2.5, 9.12, 19.24, 20.25-26; XV.1.3, 2.2, 2.4, 3, 27.49; On Augustine's notion of faith in *Trin.*: Cf: L. Ayres, *Trinity*, faith in various contexts 147-170; Fattal, *Plotin chez Augustin*, 38-39; M. Smalbrugge, *La Nature Trinitaire de l'Intelligence Augustinienne de la Foi*, dissertation University of Amsterdam, Netherlands (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998); E. te Selle, "Faith", *AttA*, 347-350.

135 Augustine quotes Plato in *Trin.* IV.18.24: 'One of those men who were accounted wise among the Greeks himself said: "As eternity is to that which has originated, so truth is to faith." ' Hill notes that this quote is from *Timaeus* 29c. Hill's own translation of Plato's Greek is as follows: 'As being is to becoming, so is truth to faith (belief).' Hill presumes Augustine was quoting from the translation of Cicero. Hill, *Trinity*, 175.

136 The word *pistis* seems to be the root of the term epistemology, in how one comes to believe something is truth. *Pistis* and *pisteuein* are used throughout the *Enneads*, not always in the sense of 'belief', but in other variations such as 'confidence'. There are too many references to list here. See J.H. Sleeman, G. Pollet, *Lexikon Plotinianum*, (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 842-843.

137 *Enn.* V.3.17.28: '...but how can one describe the absolutely simple? But it is enough if the intellect comes into contact with it; but when it has done so, while the contact lasts, it is absolutely impossible, nor has it time to speak; but it is afterwards that it is able to reason about it. **One must believe one has seen**, when the soul takes light; for this is from him and he is it; we must think that he is present (LZ: The One) when, like another god whom someone called to his house, he comes and brings light to us: for if he had not come, he would not have brought the light. So the unenlightened soul does not have him as a god; but when it is enlightened, it has what it has sought, and this is the soul's true end, to touch that light and see it by itself, not by another light, but by the light which is also means of seeing. It must see that light by which it is enlightened: for we do not see the sun by another light than his own. How then can this happen? Take away everything!'

the immaterial.¹³⁸ Yet Plotinus' designation of faith is marginal compared to Augustine's extensive treatment and elaboration as the means which leads to understanding and to knowledge.¹³⁹ Nonetheless the subject of faith will be considered here a 'gray zone'.

I have been able to locate very little literature on Plotinus and the topic of faith.¹⁴⁰ This subject clearly requires more research. For example, not only on the usage of the term *pistis* in the *Enneads* but whether other terms, expressions or concepts were employed to depict the notion of assumption or belief. Plotinus' discourse on the intelligibility of the Intellect subsumed the existence of Intellect and the One. His accounts of ascending to the *Nous* and the One also reflected his own experiences. Thus it would be helpful to have a clear assessment to what extent Plotinus explicitly spoke of the necessity of 'making correct assumptions' as prerequisite to comprehending and apprehending truth and becoming conscious of the Intellect and One before ascending.

In Augustine's extensive treatments on faith, he warned against having the wrong kind of faith, believing in something which was essentially fictitious (*Trin.* XIII.1.3). In *Conf.* he repeatedly accused the origin myths of the Manichaeans as being based upon fantasy images (*Conf.* III.6.10, etc.), a faith which was not conducive to further insight or knowledge of God. He asserted that tenets must be substantiated by some kind of verifiable verity, which in his eyes, the Manichaean myth lacked. Faith should be anchored in a proper authority with a tradition, such as the Old and New Testament, which served as a collective revelation, not to just a certain privileged few.

Christ's life as told in the gospels¹⁴¹ was for Augustine an object of contemplation, a source of wisdom and a tool for redemption. Scripture served as a kind of *scientia* in the sense one took in this knowledge by exterior concentration: for example, by reading the New Testament or hearing it preached. Noteworthy is Augustine's approach to Scripture in *Gen. litt* XII.11.22, his explanation of the three visions illustrated by the biblical commandment 'Love your neighbor'. Here he demonstrates the understanding of scripture through the ascent from corporeal vision (seeing the letters with sense perception), to spiritual vision (loving the neighbor internally visualized) and then by intellectual vision, '*love observed intellectually*'. Here he indicates that the meaning of the text was raised to a higher level of understanding in which its true sense should be understood. In this way, the Scriptures would serve as *scientia* (as well as the source of rules of faith), to promote the deeper significance in intellectual vision, *sapientia*. Faith, too, in Christ and the Trinity was a form of *scientia*, a temporal form of knowledge which would later be replaced by understanding as in *sapientia*. Both were given by Christ as grace.

138 *Enn.* I.3.3.: 'But the philosopher-he is the one who is by nature ready to respond and "winged" we may say, and in no need of separation like the others. (LZ: separation from the divine, intelligible world; the 'others' are two other examples, a musician or a lover.) He had begun to move into the higher world and is only at a loss for someone to show him the way. So he must be shown and set free, with his own good will, he who has long been free by nature. He must be given mathematical studies to train him in philosophical thought and accustom him to firm confidence in the existence of the immaterial-he will take to them easily, being naturally disposed to learning; he is by nature virtuous and must be brought to perfect his virtues, and after his mathematical studies instructed in dialectic and made a complete dialectician.' Also *Enn.* VI.5.8.1-5: concerning belief in the participation of matter and the forms.

139 e.g.: *Trin.* XI-XIII; Chapter V.3.iii.g.

140 R. Holte discusses the influence of *pistis* in the *Enneads* on Augustine's notion of *fides* in an affirmative manner. *Béatitude et Sagesse, Saint Augustin et le problème de la fin de l'homme dans la philosophie ancienne*, (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1962) 316-317.

141 In formulating a summary of Augustine's doctrines in *Trin.*, Ayres underlines the importance of faith as related to Scripture: 'Scripture is important here, because we should read Scripture according to Augustine and have faith in the things we cannot see (= we didn't see Christ in his incarnation). ...We should seek to see what is said and done in His *Forma Servi* as drawing of our desires and intellects towards the *Forma Dei* that will remain hidden until the eschaton.' (Ayres, *Trin.* 146).

Augustine's theory of the three visions described above, reproduced faithfully a Plotinian epistemological ascent, applied to his exegetical method of scripture. It was of no coincidence, that the biblical commandment 'Love your neighbor', which he interpreted was also one of the departure points in his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis*, concerning the element love. The elaboration of this commandment represents one of the major differences of thought between Augustine and Plotinus. This difference will be discussed in the next section 4 on love.

However, these two points, the scriptural context and faith before understanding, should be considered a gray area here and not a major point of difference between Augustine and Plotinus for a number of different reasons. The Old and New Testament as Holy Scripture was naturally absent in the *Enneads*. Yet the *Enneads*, in the eyes of the author himself and of many others in antiquity, including Augustine, gave a faithful interpretation of the thought of the mentor, Plato (*Civ. Dei*. IX.10). There is much to be said here on Plotinus' reverence for Plato, (for instance, calling him 'godlike'), who lived approximately 700 years earlier. It would be going too far to say that Plotinus considered the dialogues of Plato 'Holy Scripture', yet he did revere Plato as the ancient authority on truth. In this sense, the *Enneads* were in fact an exegesis of Plato's works.

Another factor of interest concerning Augustine's dependency on Holy Scripture within the context of this comparison of epistemologies, is that the biblical passages which Augustine employed for his doctrine of the intellect-image were indeed selective. For Augustine, it was apparently clear that certain biblical passages did not present a challenge of fusing them with Plotinian epistemology. For example in Paul (Col. 3:1), to 'put on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator' can be easily reconciled with Plotinus' conception of *nous*, in its conscious unity with the *Nous*, becoming an image of the Intellect and the true self. Other examples include: the distinction of terms 'inner and outer man' of Paul ('Even if our outer man is decaying, the inner man is being renewed from day to day': 2 Cor. 4:16) can also be found in Plato and Plotinus.¹⁴² Paul's mentioning of 'two kinds of knowledge' ('To one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit': 1 Cor. 12:8) formed the basis of Augustine's integration of Plotinus' two kinds of knowledge or modes of thinking (*Trin.* XII.15.25). In this way, he formulated his own theory of two kinds of knowledge *scientia* and *sapientia*. John 1:1-5, 9 could be applied to Plotinus' second Hypostasis *Nous*: 'In the beginning was the Word (*Logos*) and the Word was with God...and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made...In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.' (*Conf.* VII.9.13; e.g. *Gen. litt* 1.2.6). The divine Intellect as demiurge and Wisdom could correspond to some extent to Jesus Sirach 1-8, where the Creator is depicted as Wisdom (as in Augustine's *Gen. litt* I.5.10). Lastly, 1 John 2:15 typifies Plotinus' philosophy perfectly: 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.'

The question could be raised as to what extent these biblical passages were originally influenced by Greek philosophy or Middle Platonism (such as Philo of Alexandria) in the first place.¹⁴³ In that sense, we could confirm that Augustine's use of authoritative texts was indeed similar to Plotinus' perusal of the *corpus platonicorum*, in that it was highly selective. (Plotinus based his interpretation almost exclusively on Plato's dialogues.)

142 *Enn.* I.1.10.15, V.1.10.10-11; Plato: *Republic* IX.587A7; 589A7.

143 For example, on the influence of Greek philosophy (Stoicism, Middle-Platonism) on the letter of Paul: G.H. van Kooten, "The Pauline Debate on the Cosmos: Graeco-Roman Cosmology and Jewish Eschatology in Paul and in the Pseudo-Pauline Letters to the Colossians and the Ephesians" dissertation: University of Leiden Netherlands, 2001.

Hence, Augustine accentuated that the understanding of God was accessible to us through Scripture and through Christ's illumination, both of which we could use as objects of contemplation. Although, as he admits in *Gen. litt.* I.19.38, Scripture is not always immediately comprehensible. To tie this in with the second point of difference (c.), Christ's Incarnation, the Scriptures, as well as the faith required to understand them, all shared the common property of being 'exterior' means (*scientia*) to coming to knowledge of God. However the assimilation of such truth remained an immaterial, intellectual activity requiring immaterial conditions: Christ's grace and Illumination. In spite of the fact that these aspects do not constitute major differences in the thought of Augustine and Plotinus, the fact that they play such a significant role in Augustine's Christology represents indeed an indisputable major distinction and changes the perspective somewhat. For that reason, the topics in this subsection will return to the discussion table in point 3.iii.g. 'Augustine's Reception of Plotinus' Epistemology'.

3.iii.e. Prayer

Many of the passages in the *Enneads* could be regarded as spiritual exercises which were important for developing the intellect and assimilating the immaterial mode of thought.¹⁴⁴ As accounted for in Chapter V.3.iv.h., Augustine's epistemology included spiritual exercises and prayer, as both were integral to spiritual development. Yet considering the activity of prayer, Augustine seemed to advocate the necessity and utility of prayer (especially in other works than the *Trin.*) to a greater extent than Plotinus. However this point could be debated. Yet I have found no literature on this subject. Nonetheless, we must recognize that in Augustine the aspects of faith, revelation and the use of Scripture were bound to his doctrine of prayer. This does then point to a significant difference between his thinking and that of Plotinus.

Augustine also extended the activity of contemplation not only to spiritual exercises in order to develop the intellect, as Plotinus did, but also to prayer. The prayer at the end of the work (XV.28.51), which was the only complete prayer in *Trin.*, was nonetheless of symbolic importance in Augustine's mystagogy in *Trin.*¹⁴⁵ The same focus on God necessary to lift one's mind up to God the Trinity, could be effectuated through the individual's own initiative in the activity of prayer. In praying, the will functioned properly, its brokenness was amended. Prayer was in this sense a form of conversion to God, directing one's desires to God, ventilating them and confessing one's sins, giving thanks and praise. Prayer reinforced the personal element of the divine by the communication with one's personal savior, Christ. The only explicit reference to genuine prayer in Plotinus was *Enn.* V.1.6.9-11: '*Let us speak of it in this way, first invoking God himself, not in spoken words, but stretching ourselves out with our soul into prayer (euchên) to him, able in this way to pray alone to him alone.*'¹⁴⁶ Here he is asking God to assist him in reaching out to the incomprehensible One.¹⁴⁷

144 M. Strozynski designates which treatises in *Enn.* could be considered spiritual exercises in chapter 2 of *Mystical Experience and Philosophical Discourse in Plotinus*, (Póznán: Publishing House of the Póznán Society for the Advancement of the Arts and Sciences, 2008). He quotes S. Rappe (*Reading Neo-Platonism* (Cambridge: University Press, 2000) 39, as deeming the treatises of *The Enneads* as 'meditation manuals.'

145 e.g.: Zwollo: "Prayer, Desire and the *Imago Trinitatis*", forthcoming.

146 Another example of prayer by Plotinus (in describing an ascent): '*Keep this, and apprehend in your mind another, taking away the mass: take away also the places, and the mental picture of matter in yourself and do not try to apprehend another sphere smaller in mass than the original one, but calling on the god who made that of which you have a mental picture, pray him to come. May he come, bringing his own universe with him, all the god with him, he who is one and all,....*' (*Enn.* V.8.9.11-16). There is another mentioning of prayer in *Enn.* IV.4.30-39, concerning calling upon the lesser deities which Plotinus regarded as magical activity. He wholly disapproved of magic and theurgy.

147 Armstrong comments: '*For the whole of Platonic philosophy as he (Plotinus) understood it, is a method of prayer in the large traditional sense of lifting up the heart and mind to God.*' (*Enneads*, vol. V., 29; also "Chapter 15: The One and the Intellect" in: A.H. Armstrong (ed.), *Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), 236-249, 260.

Praying for material needs was not Augustine's objective in his 'Prayer to the Holy Trinity'. There his prayer was an expression of his desire to remain attached to God and become reformed by him. It included an apology for his verbosity and an exposition on the limitation of human language to communicate truth about the nature of God. Aside from the closure of *Trin.* Augustine penned many other prayers (*Confessions* could also be regarded as one prolonged prayer¹⁴⁸) and in other texts he instructed others how one should pray.¹⁴⁹ In my view, Augustine's 'Prayer to the Trinity' demonstrated that the activity of prayer, -directing oneself to God, fitted neatly into the goals of his doctrine of *imago Trinitatis*. This entailed the voluntary lifting of one's focus from oneself to God. Prayer was for Augustine also an expression of humility.

Augustine indirectly showed the importance of prayer at the end of the *Trin.* by having composed a full-blown oration addressed to the Holy Trinity, as a sort of token of his doctrine expressed in his other works. Because the element of prayer in itself did not deviate from Plotinus' thinking whatsoever, it should therefore be considered a gray area, not a major difference. Yet the fact that the emphasis on prayer is much more pronounced in Augustine's Christology, places this issue in a different light. Prayer for Augustine is a means of strengthening one's personal, individual and even collective relationship (as a member of a church community) to God. It makes up an important part of Augustine's account of the ascent and his Christology. In these contexts, prayer gains greater significance. It will be discussed again in the upcoming two sections on love (4) and the ascent (5).

3.iii.f. On the Divinity of the Soul

The passage below is one of many good examples from the *Enneads* in which the soul is portrayed as becoming one with Intellect and the One with ease. '*For we and what is ours go back to real being and ascend to that (LZ: Intellect) ...and we think the intelligibles; we do not have images or imprints of them. But if we do not, **we are the intelligibles. If then we have a part in true knowledge, we are those**; we do not apprehend them as distinct within ourselves, but we are within them. For since the others, and not only ourselves, are those, we are all those. So then, being together with all things, we are those: so then, **we are all and one.**' (Enn. VI.5.7.1-5).¹⁵⁰ Augustine on the other hand, consistently makes statements such as this: '*By that same token when we know God, we are indeed made better ourselves than we were before we knew him, especially when we like this knowledge and appropriately love it and it becomes a word and kind of likeness to God; yet it remains inferior to God because it is an inferior nature, our consciousness being a creature, but God the Creator.*' (*Trin.* IX.11.16).¹⁵¹*

At first sight, Augustine's distinction between God and humans would seem to represent a major difference in their doctrines and epistemologies. Yet both Augustine and Plotinus distinguished the human intellect from the rest of the soul, both posited that it was immaterial and the location of the image of God. However, Augustine declared unambiguously that the human soul-intellect, as creature of the Creator, could not possibly be divine and thus he made this a striking aspect in his ontology.¹⁵²

148 Brachtendorf, *Augustinus Confessiones*, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005).

149 E.g.: Zwollo, "Prayer, Desire", forthcoming.

150 Also: '*Since **the soul is so honourable and divine** a thing, be sure already that you can attain God by reason of its being of this kind, and with this as your motive ascend to him:...*' Enn. V.1.3.1-4. See also throughout V.1.2-3.

151 '*That the soul, you see, was made by the all-powerful God, and that accordingly it is not a part of God or identical with his nature, is stated quite plainly in another passage of scripture, where the prophet says...(Ps. 33:15, ...Zech. 12:1)*' (*Gen. litt. contra Manicheos* 8.11, Hill).

152 On the differentiation of creatures and Creator in Augustine: e.g.: *Gen. litt.* I.1.2, VII.6.9, VII.11.17 (a refutation of those whose believe in the consubstantiality of the soul with God); *Trin.* IV.9.12; etc.

This topic has been discussed many times already, especially in Chapter III on Plotinus. It will be helpful to review now what has been concluded on this topic throughout this study so far. In doing so, we will be able to integrate new insights from the present section comparing the epistemology of both thinkers.

Recapitulation

We must begin when this question was first posed, in Chapter II.3.iii, as to why Augustine attacked the Manichaeans for their claim of the consubstantiality of the human soul with the divine (*Conf.* III.6.10) yet refrained from critique of Plotinus' explicit statements concerning the divinity of the human soul and intellect?¹⁵³ Moreover, in *Civ. Dei* VIII.6 and X.2, Augustine mentioned in his praise of the Platonists that they, too, understood that there were significant differences between creatures and the Creator. In Chapter III on Plotinus,¹⁵⁴ we returned to this question in order to evaluate it in the context of Plotinus' psychology. There it became evident that Plotinus had indeed taken sufficient account of the differences between 'Makers and their products',¹⁵⁵ in the sense that the divine was immaterial, pure Being, eternal and unchangeable; the material, temporal, mutable and of a lesser being. In Chapter III.3 and 4, the issue of the status of the soul in Plotinus branched out in several directions. There we examined Plotinus' statements on the soul and intellect, (which were also deemed as incorporeal-the lower soul however being connected to the physical) in which they were unambiguously designated as divine. Additionally, from Plotinus' cosmology it was also clear that the soul and intellect were of divine origin.¹⁵⁶ The intellect was shown to be directly and immediately connected with the divine Intellect. In certain treatises, he even described the lower part of the soul as having been descended, while the intellect was undescended, always remaining in the domain of the divine intellect (for example in *Enn.* IV.7.13.1-4). Thus, it seemed that, although Plotinus had indeed sufficiently distinguished between the divine and the material world, he failed to make the distinction clear between the human intellect and the divine Intellect.

Let us turn back a moment to Chapter II: to Augustine's story in *Conf.* VII of how he experimented with the Platonist inward turn. There he criticized the Platonists for their lack of consideration of the weaknesses of the soul and the will in the elevation of the soul to God. Yet we saw in Chapter III.3.iii.v. ('Matter, Evil, Sin and Error') that Plotinus had certainly taken sufficient account of the weaknesses of the

153 Treated in Chapter II.1.ii.f., 2.v.a.; and 2.v.c.: 'On the Problematic Position of the Divine Soul'

154 Chapter III.3.iv.: ('On the Divinity of the Intellect'); 3.vi.: ('The Divinity of the Intellect 2'); 3.vi.a.: ('The Difficulty of the Soul and Defining the Human Intellect'); and 4.iv.: ('Continuation of the Difficulty of the Soul and Defining the Human Intellect'); 4.iv.a.: ('The Failure of the *Nous-nous*').

155 Chapter III.2.ii.d.: ('Plotinus' Ontology: the Relationship Between Two Worlds...')

156 Plotinus on the origin of the soul (Chapter III.2.iii.b.). The human soul came into existence in the following way: first, the individual intellects were divided from the divine Intellect. They were then transmitted to the Soul-*Nous*, to the World Soul, (both of whom received them by contemplation of the Form principles). The latter split itself up into individual souls, called *logoi*, which were joined to the form principles and the individual intellects. Then they were transmitted further downwards to join a physical body. Thus, the origin of the soul in Plotinus was unambiguously the intelligible, invisible, transcendent and divine realm.

Augustine on the other hand identified the origin of the soul in the *caelum caeli*, heaven or the angelic realm, beings of pure intellect, a region which was created directly by the Word of God (*Gen. litt* III.20.30; Chapter IV.2.iv. and 3.ii.). Augustine clarified here, given that the angels and human souls were creatures, they could not possibly be divine. Due to their lives in a physical body in the dimension of time and space, human souls, unaware of their origin and knowledge of God, were obliged to attain the knowledge of God in a gradual manner in the dimension of time and space. The human soul would only become eternal, immortal and godlike in the afterlife under the condition that the soul would be purified and prepared for it. Thus the origin of the soul in Augustine's doctrine was without question not divine.

It appears here that the way in which the two thinkers described the origin of the soul discloses the general differences in their views on the status of human soul. However, Plotinus' doctrine of soul is more nuanced than this, as the section below will show.

soul, the will, including the human propensity for sin, all of which created difficulties for the ascent.¹⁵⁷ In certain brief passages in the *Enneads*, statements could be found in which the difference between the *nous* and the *Nous* was expressed. However he failed to reconcile these with his perspective on the divinity of the soul. On the other hand, Plotinus depicted the ascent to the Intellect and the One with enormous ease, rarely or only negligibly accounting for the psychological struggles or weaknesses involved in the same context. Here he demonstrated an enormous optimism for the possibility of intellectual actualization.

Another problem in Plotinus' philosophy was discovered: if Plotinus' depicted the intellect as having an immediate connection with the divine *Nous*, then given that Plotinus depicted the intellect as a separate part of the soul, undescended and differentiated from the lower, which was connected to the body, what is the relationship between the intellect soul *logos* and intellect *nous* in their specific modes of thinking? These problems had been identified by especially Blumenthal and Emilsson.¹⁵⁸

The conclusion in Chapter III.3. (vi.a. and again in 4.iv.-in the context of the ascent) was that Plotinus not only insufficiently emphasized the human intellect's relationship to the divine Intellect, but also the relationship of the ('divine') intellect to the lower regions of the soul. My study on imaging in Plotinus' cosmology offered a partial clarification to this problem. Here an image was always inferior to its model. As such, Plotinus would have assumed that the reader understood -even in his most optimistic portrayal of the ascent- that the human intellect, as image of the divine Intellect, was distinctly inferior to that what it imaged, as he mentioned in *Enn.* I.2.7.24, 27-30.

Concerning the specific relationship of the soul-*logos* to the intellect-*nous* and how Plotinus thought about reconciling these two contradictory aspects of his epistemology and doctrine of Intellect, the following hypothesis was suggested: the soul-*logos* imitated the transcendent *Logos* in the Godhead, who always had an immediate contact with the transcendent *Nous*. Thus it would appear that human soul would be constantly capable of being in contact with the *nous* above it, as its inherent potential. Contact with the material temporal world on the other hand would distract it from its ultimate destination, its actualization. Its good will would overcome this (in desiring to be good and loving the Good- the One) to maintain its orientation to God. To support this, Plotinus' statement that the *logos*, that is, its mode of thinking (*dianoêtikon*) and the particular kind of knowledge it obtained, was an image of the intellect, its *noêsis* and truth.¹⁵⁹ In that sense, the potential of the soul to become intellect was always guaranteed.

Furthermore, as Brachtendorf pointed out, Plotinus expounded that most people only contemplated the Ideas while in the discursive mode of thinking: one or a few separate Ideas at a time. Thus, obtaining the full intellectual vision would likely occur less frequently.¹⁶⁰ In conclusion, although Plotinus posited that the soul-intellect was divine, if one read further and more deeply into his doctrines, it became clear that he neutralized these claims considerably. We will return to this matter in section 5 on the Ascent. For now we shall return to the question as to why Augustine would refrain from critique of Plotinus' explicit statements on the divinity of the soul and intellect. This will be evaluated in light of the dependence on Plotinus' epistemology on Augustine's thinking and how he received it.

157 *Conf.* VII.20-26, 9.13, 20.26. (Chapter II.1.ii.c. and e.)

158 Blumenthal "On Soul and Intellect", *CCP* (1999), 82-104; Emilsson, *Intellect*, 176-191. See Chapter III.3.iii. ('Plotinus' Notion of the Rational Soul *Logistikon*: *logos* and *nous*'), iv. ('The Divinity of the Intellect 1'), 4.iii.a. ("a. The Human Soul *Logos* Contemplating the Ideas') and iv. ('Continuation of the Discussion of the Divinity of the intellect and the Difficulties of the Soul').

159 The human soul is an image of Intellect: e.g. *Enn.* V.1.3; V.3.8.8-end.

160 Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 15-19.

3.iii.g. Augustine's Reception of Plotinus' Epistemology and Psychology

In light of the many correspondences between Augustine's and Plotinus' theories of knowledge, the question is now: how did Augustine alter Plotinus' epistemology to suit his own doctrines? First of all, Augustine emphasized the gap between the creaturely soul and the divine Creator in his writing repeatedly so that it would remain more than obvious. He must have surely perceived the philosophical discrepancies created in Plotinus' thought in positing the soul or intellect as divine. By stressing the ontological differences between Creator and creature, he removed all doubt of anything human being divine in any way. The only exception to this was, of course, Jesus Christ.

As regards the relationship of the lower rational soul to the higher, we saw in Augustine's *se nosse* and *se cogitare* the same gray zone as Plotinus' discursive and higher contemplative thinking. *Notitia sui* was indeed oriented to the divine, yet Augustine was careful to point out that this higher mode of consciousness did not possess a total connection to the divine (see quote above-*Trin.* IX.11.16). Augustine's explanation of the differences in self-knowledge in terms of orientation (material vs. divine) (following Plotinus' view on knowledge) was to some extent satisfactory. But the question remained, does the soul 'jump' from one consciousness to the other and if so, then how? As concluded in Chapter III.4.iv., Plotinus did not provide a clear response to this.

I propose that Augustine resolved this by tying the two kinds of knowledge closely together, *scientia* and *sapientia*, 'marrying them' as it were (*Trin.* XII.12.19) to the extent that the gray zones made more sense. An example is *Trin.* XII.14.21: '*For knowledge (scientia) too is good within its proper limits if what blows up or tends to blow up in it is overcome by the love of eternal things, which does not blow up but builds up, as we know. Indeed without knowledge (scientia) one cannot have the virtues which make up for right living and by which this woeful life is so conducted that one may finally reach the truly happy life which is eternal.*' This is a statement which Plotinus would not disagree with. However Augustine endowed this gray zone with profound purpose, by explicitly integrating the element of faith -faith as *scientia* or knowledge of temporal things- into his epistemology. Faith was an element which was present in Plotinus' philosophy yet was underplayed (see point 3.ii.d.). Moreover, Augustine's view of faith encompassed, among others things, belief in the Incarnation of Christ, which was, of course, non-existent in the *Enneads*. In his epistemology, faith provided a link between *scientia* and *sapientia* (*Trin.* XIII.1.2).

Our knowledge (scientia) therefore is Christ, and our wisdom (sapientia) is the same Christ. It is he who plants faith in us about temporal things, he who presents us with the truth about eternal things. Through him we go straight toward him, through knowledge (scientia) toward wisdom (sapientia). Without ever turning aside from the one and the same Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3). But now we are speaking of knowledge; later on we are going to speak about wisdom, as far as he himself enables us to do so. Nor of course should we take these two as if we could never call this one that is concerned with human affairs wisdom or that one that is concerned with divine things knowledge, in a broader manner of speaking each can be called wisdom and each knowledge. (Trin. XIII.19.24)

Implied here is that one must have faith in what one reads in the Scriptures about the life of Christ on earth (*Trin.* XIII.1-3. etc.). Because this faith is a gift to us from Christ, we should trust its veracity

and attach ourselves to it in spite of its temporal character.¹⁶¹ (This is a conception one would not find in the *Enneads*.) Scripture is also a form of *scientia* which will eventually lead to *sapientia* or divine knowledge. Faith however is the precursor to true understanding and therefore cannot pertain to *sapientia* (XIII.20.26). This eternal wisdom shall be given in complete, eternal contemplation at the end of time, but in the meantime, while still in this life, the understanding can also be acquired progressively when the image of God receives eternal, universal knowledge in Christ's illumination (XIV.19.26), in other words by means of intellectual vision. Besides faith, Augustine considers the virtues one acquires in this life temporal as well, (*Trin.* XII.14.21) because in the next life they will no longer be required, we will no longer have to endure evil (XIV.1.3, etc.). The main point here is that Christ, as the giver of all knowledge, lifts the soul from temporal, material knowledge to eternal and immaterial knowledge by his grace.

The final statement from Augustine's quote above is also a claim with which Plotinus would definitely concur. (*'Nor of course should we take these two as if we could never call this one that is concerned with human affairs wisdom or that one that is concerned with divine things knowledge, in a broader manner of speaking each can be called wisdom and each knowledge.'*) As we recall, Plotinus used the terms *epistême* and *gnôsis* alternatively. However, the quote demonstrates that Augustine provided a better articulation of this predicament- of the gray zone- better than Plotinus. It also helped that his terminology for the two kinds of knowledge were differentiated and coherent. As a result, Augustine succeeded in strengthening the unity of the soul more so than in Plotinus, by making it dependent upon the intervention of Christ who moved the human mind up from *scientia* to *sapientia*. Faith in Christ, faith in the content of the Scripture -all of which were *scientia*- were prerequisite to this movement.

To continue the discussion on Augustine's reception, let us pinpoint a few more major differences in Plotinus' and Augustine's thinking. For Augustine, certain psychological factors were not elaborated explicitly enough in Plotinus' theory of knowledge. This leads us to the discussion of Augustine's treatment of the problematic human will. He devoted lengthy passages to this topic in *Conf.* VII and VII (Chapter II.1.ii.c.), explaining how the deficient human will hindered the ascent to God. Then in *Gen. litt.* in his exegesis of the story of Adam and Eve (Chapter IV.3.iv.b.), he demonstrated that the first two humans had instigated original sin by their defective will. As such, all of humanity inherited these defects as well. This consisted of a turning away from God's will in spite of the intentions to do something good or worthwhile. In *Trin.* Augustine dealt again with the human will in the following ways:¹⁶² its unity in the triad of memory, intelligence and *voluntas* (*Trin.* X.10.13-end) –here the will played a role in acquiring self-knowledge; its involvement in triads of the outer man in book XI: here, again, the will had a part in acquiring knowledge. The will was also associated in particular with the element love and desire (XI.2.5). As in Plotinian philosophy, Augustine depicted the will as either

161 Augustine shows how the sounds of the words of faith perceived by the senses operate through an outer trinity of recollection-thinking attention-love/will. Yet this trinity does not constitute an *imago Trinitatis*. He brings virtues into the picture as well, which are associated with faith: 'We must now bring this book to an end with the admonition that the just man lives on faith (i.a. Rom. 1:17) and that this faith works through love (Gal. 5:6); in this way the virtues, too, by which one lives sagaciously, courageously, moderately and justly, are all to be related to the same faith. Otherwise they would not be true virtues. ...Whatever notions this faith and such a life produce in the consciousness of the believing man, when they are contained in the memory, and looked at in recollection, and please the will, they yield a trinity of its own kind. But the image of God,...is not yet found in this trinity.' (*Trin.* XIII.20.26); He explains this again throughout book XIV, e.g.: 2.4.

162 Chapter V.3.ii.b.: ('A Prelude to the Study of the Triads in the *Imago Trinitatis* Book VIII'), 3.ii.e.: ('The Object of the Trinities: Self and God'), 3.iv.a.: ('Introduction: Defining the Frontiers of the Element Love') and 3.iv.g.: ('Self-Love and Longings: Between Truth and Delusion').

directed to higher eternal goods or to lower material ones (*Trin.* XI.6.10). As in *Conf.*, Augustine repeatedly stressed the soul's difficulty of keeping her focus on God because of her inclination to fall back, being weighed down by sin, greed and wanderlust (*Trin.* VIII.2.3). *Trin.* XIII.2.5 refers to the necessity of the collaboration of the human will in order to believe and also to persevere in faith. Thus, Augustine's preoccupation with the will and the debilities of the soul was still urgent enough to elaborate it further even up to the end of his last major work (*Trin.* XV.27.50). The conclusion here is therefore: that Augustine treated the human will, sin and related matters more extensively, more explicitly and in many more contexts than Plotinus.

For Augustine, other psychological factors were missing as well in Plotinus' philosophy. Another point of Augustine's critique of the Platonists from *Conf.* VII.20.26 was their neglect of the importance of humility. This could only be sufficiently grasped by accepting and partaking of the human life of the Son of God's Incarnation, which also entailed clearly recognizing human faults and thus the inherent difference between oneself and God. Hence, for Augustine, Plotinus' psychology did not address the question of arrogance to the extent that it should have (and it could never have as long as it denied the important lessons involved in the story of the life of Christ). Yet the subject of humility was in fact implied in Plotinus' perspective of the will, as in the "wrong focus" which led to illusions and potential vice.¹⁶³ It was also included in the notion of *tolma*, in desiring to be independent, to turn away and be separate from one's divine source (*Enn.* V.1.1). The difference here is Augustine's underlining that this arrogance blocked all further personal development, including one's ascent to God, which included obtaining divine knowledge. Pride led ultimately to spiritual death. The only remedy of such was Christ, who would bring us to true life and resurrection (*Trin.* IV.10.13, 12.15).

Although Plotinus discussed the weaknesses of the soul or the will throughout the *Enneads*, it was not clear whether Plotinus mentioned the necessity of self-critique. However for Augustine, the examination of conscience and confession of sin, combined with the realization of the vast imperfections of human existence, which were concentrated in his complex psychology of the human will, came forward as an explicit prerequisite for becoming healed and progressing further on the road to obtaining *sapientia* and becoming godlike (*ibid*). These points were of utmost importance in his doctrine of the image of God and the ascent to God. Their accentuation was missing in Plotinus' epistemology and psychology. In sum, the realization of the soul's deficiencies and the influence of sin in human life represented for Augustine a clear argument why the soul could in no way be divine (*Trin.* XV.27.50).

As regards Augustine's reception of Plotinus, he surely must have read Plotinus' treatments on the deficiencies of the soul and the will. He must have additionally noticed as well the problem that these treatments were not referred to directly in the same context of the intellect's ascent to God. Augustine apprehended in the *Enneads* the ontological division between the divine and physical creatures. However, he also noted the lacuna (or the mere subtle suggestions of differences) left by

163 In *Trin.* XIV.20.26, Augustine praises the Platonists for their conception of the eternal soul as well as the benefits of living a virtuous life in order to become happy. Yet he regrets that their lack of faith in Christ will leave them unhappy men. 'But from the philosophers, as he himself admits (LZ: 'he' is Cicero-who is the subject of discussion in this chapter, whom Augustine is quoting here) "and they the greatest and far and away the most brilliant", he had learnt that souls are eternal. It is quite reasonable that eternal minds should be stirred by his exhortation to be found in their course when they come to the end of this life, "that is in reason and in eager inquiry", and should "mix themselves up less in the tangled vices and errors of men", to make their return to God all the easier. But this course, which is set in the love of and inquiry into truth, is not enough for unhappy men, that is for all mortals who have this reason alone without any faith in the mediator.'

Plotinus concerning the relationship between the intellect and the divine Intellect. Only by having extensive knowledge of Plotinus' philosophy, could a reader understand how these two aspects were reconciled. This comprehension would not be likely if one merely read a few popular treatises from the *Enneads*, such as I.6 or V.I. In order to incorporate Plotinus' epistemology to such an extent as we have seen in this section, Augustine must have certainly studied many of the more difficult and lengthy treatises such as V.3 and those in book IV on the difficulties of the soul. He deemed it then a matter of urgency to fill in the lacunas in Plotinus' legacy by accentuating these same points in his own doctrines. For that reason, he underscored throughout his entire theology the division between the Creator and the created. By expressing the deficiencies of the will in at least three of his major works, *Conf.*, *Gen. litt* and *Trin.*, he elevated the will to a full-fledged doctrine as well as a hallmark of his thinking.

At the same time, in the same works, we see an extensive borrowing from Plotinus' notion of Intellect/intellect and imaging which were applied to a large degree to his doctrines of the *Verbum Dei*, the *caelum caeli*, the image of God, the intellect and his epistemology. Plotinus' teaching of the divine Intellect, the characteristics, as well as the individual human counterpart thereof, permeated his doctrine of creation and of the Trinity. These, in turn, re-confirmed his explicit appreciation of these concepts which he had described in *Civ. Dei* VIII, IX and X. Augustine's appreciation for these aspects of Plotinian philosophy impelled him to make explicit corrections. In Augustine's time, his contemporary Neo-Platonists were doing the same.¹⁶⁴

3.iii.h. On the Divinity of the Soul (2)

Now we shall return to the question as to why Augustine did not reproach Plotinus for his doctrine of the divine soul. The first reason is obvious -because of his deep knowledge of Plotinus' doctrine of intellect (such as the aspects of contemplation, imaging and true knowledge) which he apparently regarded highly and integrated into his doctrine of *imago Dei/Trinitatis*. He would have understood Plotinus' doctrine sufficiently to realize how these statements were neutralized in other parts of the *Enneads*.¹⁶⁵

Yet, there is another possibility as to why he might have refrained to mention Plotinus in his critique of the consubstantiality of the soul with the divine. A contemporary of Augustine, the Neo-Platonist Iamblichus (mentioned once in *Civ. Dei* VIII.12), a student of Porphyry, and much older than Augustine, recognized these discrepancies too in the teachings of Plotinus. Additionally, a later prominent Neo-Platonist, Proclus, who was much younger than Augustine (and whose works Augustine therefore could not have known), did so as well. The latter fact proves the continuation of Iamblichus' critique long after Augustine's death and that this critique would have surely been familiar to him. These Neo-Platonists posited the theory of the 'descended embodied soul' (to contrast Plotinus' intellect as the 'undescended soul').¹⁶⁶ However, because of the difficulties of the soul's attainment of the divine Intellect, these philosophers were both favorable to the practice of theurgy. In turn they criticized Porphyry for his reserve and critical view of these practices. Recalling Chapter II.2.ii. and *Civ. Dei* VIII.17 etc., Augustine expressed his unambiguous distaste for theurgy and demonology and angrily spills much ink on his refutation of it, defending his conviction of Christ as the sole reliable intermediary between humans and God.

164 See Chapter II.2.v.c. and Chapter III.3.iv. and vi.

165 A.H. Armstrong, "St. Augustine and Christian Platonism" in: R.A. Markus (ed.) *Augustine, A Collection of Critical Essays*, (New York: Anchor, 1972), 7.

166 *Ibid*, 8.

Thus it is altogether likely that it was Iamblichus whom Augustine was thinking of when he commended the distinction between creatures and their Creator, as he apparently made this distinction more prominent than Plotinus. Yet Plotinus did not advocate using a demon or any intermediaries; he remained optimistic of the mind's capacities to overcome the crippled condition of the soul by the power of its own contemplation and by submitting to the attraction of the forces of the divine, such as the *Eros*. All in all, the most likely conclusion to draw here is that Augustine would have rather expressed his preference for Plotinus' view -and omit his critique of the passages on the divinity of the soul- than to concede in any way to theurgy or its practitioners. We will depart now from this question but return again to it in the context of the comparison of the ascent of both thinkers in the section 5. We will see again in that section that Augustine indeed found it imperative to correct Plotinus where he failed to explain important elements concerning the ascent.

3.iv. Summary of Conclusions: Similarities and Differences

The numerous affinities between Plotinus' intellect and Augustine's image of God showed unambiguously that the characteristics of the *nous* or intellectual vision which Augustine read in the *Enneads* were of great importance for his delineation of the trajectory of personal evolution which an image of God must undergo, in order to augment its imaging and imitation of Christ AND as a way of finding peace and contentment in this life. Augustine's epistemology, including the imaging of the intellect, corresponded almost exactly to that of Plotinus. The intellect was an image of the second Trinitarian Person which Augustine likewise delineated with characteristics of Plotinus' doctrine of Intellect and *Logos* as we saw in section 2 on the Godhead. In turn, the divine second Person/Hypostasis had a special relationship to the first divine Person/Hypostasis, its source. Augustine, just as Plotinus, posited that the intellect was free from sin and fallibility; it encompassed the notion of the good working will, which knew the way to upward orientation and realized its wholly dependent relationship on the second divine Trinitarian entity and the Ideas. In its unification with God, it assimilated to some degree eternal Being, immateriality and immutability, thereby realizing a resemblance to God in a gradual manner. Augustine's doctrine of the image of God can be described as entailing a realistic, critical view of mankind and the human soul, contrasted with an enormous optimism on the potential to become a perfect image of God by actualizing one's intellect. In this manner, Augustine's view was in this sense distinctly similar to the philosophy of Plotinus.

Plotinus' influence was also detectable in the development of his doctrine of the image of God from *Gen. litt* to *Trin*. In *Gen. litt*, Augustine's demonstration of imaging was limited to the relationship of the intellect with the second Person and not to the three divine Persons (Chapter VI.3.i.a.). We were able to deduce from this Augustine's apparent dissatisfaction with his image doctrine after composing *Gen. litt.*, wishing to complete it in *Trin*. by providing a whole picture of imaging in the human soul, following the example of Plotinus' *Enneads*. In other words, the Plotinian system of the soul/intellect imaging the triune Godhead was a model for Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis*, which thereby included the necessity of correction on a number of major and minor points.

The first of the major differences in Augustine's and Plotinus' conceptions of image-intellect were already provided in Augustine's critique of the Platonists in Chapter II.1.ii.a. The major element which he claimed in *Conf.* VII.9.13 was missing from Platonist philosophy involved the Incarnation of the second divine Trinitarian entity, Christ, who for Augustine played a foremost role in his epistemology in *Trin*. as personal divine intermediary. The human soul had a personal relationship with the deity Christ who had lived a human life on earth. For Augustine, like Plotinus, the second divine Person/Hypostasis served as the source of all knowledge and wisdom through his illumination. Yet Augustine maintained that Christ's human life provided as well a source of divine knowledge. Additionally the knowledge of his exceptional

life was handed down to us in the Scriptures. In section 3.iii.d., it was established that the scriptural context of Augustine's epistemology and the element faith which embraced the veracity of its content, did not necessarily constitute major differences in the thought of the two. The Scriptures were for Augustine a form of *scientia* that the Christian reader comprehended with the assistance of intellectual vision and Christ's illumination in order to obtain *sapientia* (a good illustration of this was *Gen. litt* XII.6.15.). As for Plotinus, for Augustine, contemplating the eternal Ideas and judging oneself in the light of eternal Virtues was a way to make oneself a good person and to increase one's resemblance to God. Yet another standard by which to judge oneself by for Augustine was studying the acts and words of Jesus Christ, the perfect Image of God in his life on earth. Likewise through his personal intervention as Eternal Word and Creator, Christ brought the human soul to an adequate focus and contemplation of itself and the divine (*Trin.* XIII.19.24-see quote above). Hence, although the points of faith and scripture did not involve a marked difference between Augustine and Plotinus, these elements are so anchored in Augustine's Christology that they do form a stark deviation from Plotinus' outlook.

The second major difference dealt with Augustine's overt emphasis on a number of minor issues: the necessity of self-critique, which arose out of his greater accentuation of the weaknesses of the soul and the importance of humility. Thereby the urgency arose to confess one's sins, which, in accordance with the New Testament, would be remitted by Christ. In this way, the personal human element, -as confirmed in Augustine's inclusion of Jesus Christ in the triune Godhead in section 2 (viii.a.) which was relayed through Scripture and revelation-, permeated his epistemology throughout. Augustine's epistemology accentuated other elements to a greater extent than Plotinus', such as the importance of faith and prayer for obtaining knowledge of oneself and of the divine. As these four aspects were intricately intertwined into his Christology, they pointed to the deeply Christian character of his doctrine. They were essential for building and strengthening one's personal relationship to Christ.

As regards the issue of the divinity of the soul, Augustine had established an explicit ontological demarcation line between the Creator and creature in his doctrine of the intellect, while this aspect in Plotinus' doctrine *nous* was at times questionable. In the beginning of section 3.iii.f., this appeared a major difference between the thinking of the two. However let us now review the conclusions. In the eyes of Augustine, Plotinus indeed failed to clearly explicate the limits of the highest part of the soul and the divine. Motivated by this lacuna in the *Enneads*, Augustine subsequently felt the need to emphasize in his own doctrines the differentiation of the image of God and God, by accenting the weaknesses of the soul and the inherent deficiencies of the will. He thereby often annunciated these conditions directly in the context of his treatment of the image of God and the ascent. Because Plotinus claimed a certain direct connection of the intellect with the divine, he failed to sufficiently distinguish between the lower and higher rational soul, which was presumably divine. Augustine compensated for this deficiency in the thought of his Platonist mentor by, for example, more carefully explaining the gray zone between *scientia* and *sapientia* in his epistemology and thereby giving this lacuna significance. The explanation was fueled by his conception of the manifestation of Christ as personal intermediary who would lead the soul to higher contemplation and understanding of the divine.

In his appraisal of Platonism in *Conf.* and *Civ. Dei*, Augustine did not mention Plotinus in his critique of those who adhered to the consubstantiality of the soul with the divine. This was for several reasons: he was familiar enough with the *Enneads* to realize that Plotinus neutralized his apparently contradictory comments in other treatises. Additionally, his affinity with Plotinus (his doctrine of intellect, imaging and the ascent) was greater than his affinity of the later Neo-Platonists, who were more his contemporaries. These philosophers, unlike Plotinus, adhered to theurgy, a practice which

Augustine wholly rejected, as he made clear in *Civ. Dei* X.9-11 and 21-32 addressing Porphyry. At the same time, Augustine, just as Plotinus, advocated the image-intellect's capacity to gradually assimilate divine aspects of immateriality and eternity, of which the lower rational soul is incapable. Plotinus' doctrine of the intellect was such an extensive source of information for Augustine that we cannot label the point of the divinity of the soul as a major point of difference between them. This perspective will be examined again in the analysis of the ascent in section 5.v.b. and vii., where these aspects will be brought more into relief in the comparison involving the ascent to and the imaging of the Godhead.

4. Love-Intellect-Image

4.i. Introduction

In section three, we confirmed the established consensus that Augustine's doctrine of knowledge in *Trin.* VIII-XII was largely Plotinian. It was intricately entwined with his doctrine of love and with a biblical exegesis which he had already elaborated in other works.¹⁶⁷ Yet if love and knowledge (especially self-knowledge) were intricately fused in *Trin.* and Augustine was indebted to Plotinus for his epistemology, what are we then left to ascertain of Augustine's doctrine of love in *Trin.* and his overt biblical references? His exploration of the human mind in books VIII-X is in fact chocked full of biblical quotes such as from the Epistle of John and the letters of Paul, where love and knowledge are emphasized in one's relationship to God and redemption. In contrast to the large quantity of scholarly literature dealing with Augustine's indebtedness to Plotinus' epistemology and conceptions of self-knowledge, I have found only a few studies directly delineating Augustine's dependency on Plotinus' notion of *Erôs* for his conception of love in *Trin.* VIII-X. Some researchers acknowledge or refer to the influential role of the Platonic notion of *Eros* as Augustine's non-biblical source for his doctrine of love in *Trin.*¹⁶⁸ Yet it is usually not discussed in depth and especially Plotinus' notion of *Eros* is rarely depicted in its entirety. The exception to this are the studies of John Rist,¹⁶⁹ in which Plotinus' *Eros* is not just referred to but treated as one of Augustine's main philosophical sources, especially in Rist's recent book *Augustine Deformed*.¹⁷⁰ However Rist's inquiry is more focused on Augustine's notion of *voluntas*. Augustine does indeed fuse his

167 E.g.: *In epistulam Iohannis ad Parthos tractatus decem* (written ca. 407).

168 This discussion especially got off the ground after the publication of Anders Nygren's *Agape and Eros* in 1932-1939. It was rebuked by J. Burnaby, (*Amor Dei, A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine*, (Eugene, Oregon, USA: Wipf and Stock, 1938, 1991, 2007) and J. Rist (*Eros and Psyche Studies in Plato, Plotinus and Origen*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1967) 79-87).

169 J. Rist, *Augustine Deformed, Love, Sin and Freedom in the Western Moral Tradition*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2014), 64-65; *ibid*, "Love and Will around *De Trinitate* XV.20.38" in: Brachtendorf, *Gott, Bild*, 210. Rist asserts that Plotinus' notion of *Eros* as well as Augustine's *amor* function as a kind of an 'impulse'. Rist discusses further the link between Augustine's *voluntas* and the Stoic view on the 'will'. See also Rist, *Ancient Thought Baptized*, 148-202, 153-156. Here his treatment involves Augustine's *amor* in the context of Plato's *Symposium*. It does not always focus on *amor* in *Trin.* VIII-X; R.J. Teske describes Augustine's conception of love in *Trin.* The influence of Plotinus is mentioned but not the notion of *Eros* ("Augustine's inversion of 1 John 4:8", *Augustinian Studies* 39:1 (2008) 49-60); In Burnaby's *Amor Dei*, the influence of Plotinus on Augustine is treated but remarkably, not his notion of *Eros*. It is mentioned on p. 162, in the context of the love of the One, but is only contrasted with Augustine's Trinitarian Godhead.

170 Rist remarks on the Platonic (and evidently Plotinian) origin of Augustine's account of the relationship between love and knowledge, deeming Augustine's doctrine as 'Christian in spirit'. '...to put great emphasis on the importance of love of the beautiful (*eros tou kalou*) as the driving force, which enables, indeed compels, the philosopher, in the footsteps of the 'erotic' Socrates to endure the struggle to love a philosophical life. ...Plotinus treatment of love (*eros*) as the force behind an upward motion of the soul towards Beauty and the Good (One) -albeit, somewhat "cleaned up"- is in many respects Platonic and in this at least Augustine was largely right to think that in Plotinus Plato lived again. ...For our present purposes we need only outline the spirit of Platonic love which informs the writings of Plotinus (as of all genuine Platonists) and which in its turn partly informed Augustine's franker treatment of love and therefore, to no small extent, of the "loving will" also.' (*Augustine Deformed*, 64-65).

notion of love with *voluntas* in *Trin.* Yet as in many cases with Augustine's fusions and equations of terms, the one term is still not the other. For this reason, Rist's explication of Augustine's doctrines of will and love does not give a full picture of the correspondences between Augustine's *amor* in *Trin.* and Plotinus' *Eros*. Therefore this study endeavors to complement Rist's. Another exception is C. Tornau's concise article "*Eros versus Agape*" which also addresses the influence of Plotinus' notion of *Eros* concerning certain aspects of Augustine's doctrine of love in *Trin.* IX-X.¹⁷¹ My study will certainly complement his study as well.

First, a few remarks on the most obvious difference in the treatments between Augustine and Plotinus are of interest here. In the previous section, we noted a clear parallel between Augustine's treatment of self-knowledge in *Trin* and Plotinus' epistemology. However, the parallels to Plotinus in his treatment of love are not quite so lucid. For instance, in *Trin.* VIII-X, the elements love and knowledge are woven closely together and are as such treated simultaneously. Plotinus' treatment of love and knowledge usually occurred in two separate contexts. Yet there are a few instances in which the themes knowledge and love are woven together. The first concerned the divine Intellect in its phases of development after coming to existence as a *Logos* or Image of the One.¹⁷² The second involved the soul's ascent to the Intellect: it was not only the desire to experience intensified love and beauty which drove the soul upwards but also the desire to know (for example in *Enn.* III.8.7.1-5). Sometimes Plotinus dealt with the two themes together in the same treatise, but they were usually treated one after the other, such as V.8. *On Intelligible Beauty* (an extensive treatise where *Eros*, beauty, self-knowledge and the two types of rational knowledge are dealt with) and in another lengthy treatise VI.7 *The Forms and the Good*. In Augustine's depiction of love in Chapter V.3.iv and *Trin.* IX-X, there were many similar expressions found in the *Enneads*, for example in *Enn.* VI.7. For this reason, this treatise will be utilized here frequently.

Determining to what extent Augustine employed Plotinus' notion of *Eros*, imposes certain challenges for the researcher. This study could theoretically strive to unravel the biblical¹⁷³ from the non-biblical in Augustine's treatment of love, that is, the Epistle of John from Plotinus' epistemology and his conception of *Eros*. However it is remarkable that in the short text of 1 Ep. John, there were many general themes which would certainly not be alien to Plotinus. A few examples are: the claim that all love derives from God; love and God in the association of Light and Truth; the importance of loving God first before the world; the contemplation of God and the recognition that human sin blocked one from receiving the fullness of God's love. Hence distinguishing the biblical from the non-biblical is not always an easy feat. Furthermore, it will not always be possible here to pull apart the intertwining themes (such as knowledge and love or love and will). Overlaps and cross-referencing to material already treated elsewhere in this study occur plentifully.

171 C. Tornau, "*Eros versus Agape? Von Plotins Eros zum Liebesbegriff Augustins*" in: *Philosophisches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft* 112 (2005), 271-291; *ibid.*, "Does Love Make Us Beautiful? A criticism of Plotinus in Augustine's Tractates on the first Epistle of John" in: *Millennium* 4 (1), 93-105. The latter article deals with passages from Augustine's doctrine of love in his tenth treatise on the letter of John, which are discussed in earlier works as well. By complementing Augustine's treatment in *Trin.* with certain motifs from the tenth treatise on the *Ep. John*, Tornau has been able to identify other correspondences in the *Enneads*. For example, the analogy of the sun to the One and the Good deployed in *Enn.* VI.7.21.11-17 which Tornau sees echoed in Augustine's articulation of *caritas* and the motif of *Christus Imperator*: as the highest beauty and love which dwells within us. This highly interesting correspondence is somewhat abstract and requires much explanation. However this motif is not of direct relevance to this study. Tornau's reference to the triad of love in *Trin.* VIII and the triad *mens-notitia-amor* in *Trin.* IX is brief (at the end of his article pp. 288-289), -not as extensive as the analysis here. Yet by no means is it less instructive. An interesting similarity between Tornau's work and mine, is the dependence upon *Enn.* VI.7 for Plotinus' doctrine of *Eros*, a treatise in which I have also found many agreements to Augustine's doctrine in *Trin.* This is not often recognized in the Augustinian-Plotinian literature.

172 The loving Intellect and the thinking Intellect, treated in Chapter III.4.ii.a.; *Enn.* VI.7.35.20-28.

173 Augustine's biblical sources for his doctrine of love were predominantly 1 Cor. 13, 1 John 4:16, Matt. 22:37-40 and Gal. 5:14. Treated in Chapter V.3.iv.c.

Thus, in this section, the theme love requires an artificial splitting up. We will also focus here on how both authors dealt with love on the human level, which is intricately connected to the ascent to God by love. Yet the aspect of the ascent in both thinkers will be treated separately in section 5. This section (4) also has an additional unusual feature: the theme of love in the Godhead. From a thematic perspective, this treatment belongs more appropriately in the section comparing their views on the Godhead (section 2 of this chapter). However that section dealt more with generalities. The subject of the Godhead and Love will be treated here in a more specific way, due to its close relation to love on the human level, and due to divine love being the source of human love in both Augustine's and Plotinus' doctrine. As mentioned in section 2.vi. on the Godhead, there were a few interesting correspondences between Augustine's conception of the Holy Trinity and Plotinus' first Hypostasis the One. These correspondences are now most relevant. The best strategy for the treatment in this section is to begin with summaries of the doctrines of love of both thinkers. Thereafter in subsection iii., similar general conceptual correspondences between both authors will be brought to light -those which are most evident and require little further explanation. Then section iv. will discuss the differences and section v. 'Synthesis' will analyze the differences in order to establish the major and the minor ones.

4.ii. Summaries of Augustine and Plotinus on Love

4.ii.a. Plotinus' Notion of *Erôs*¹⁷⁴

Plotinus articulates *Eros*¹⁷⁵ as a force which derives from the ultimate source, the One, the first Hypostasis.¹⁷⁶ Love is transmitted through the Godhead, respectively to the divine Intellect and Soul, as a substantial nature (*ousias*)(*Enn.* III.5.3-4) and further to individual souls and their experiential world. This inherently active, but mostly dormant force of love in humans, can be awakened by the experience of beauty on the physical level of sense perception. Plotinus describes *Eros* as a life, a brilliance or grace which makes itself desirable and without which, beauty would be cold and inert (VI.7.22, 24). Plotinus also taught that love is light and that the soul is awakened by this light at the perception of beauty.¹⁷⁷ Human love is inspired by physical beauty in an object or person which seems indefinable. On this level of love, there is a presentiment of infinity, of the One or Good, which surpasses all Form and Thought. The soul is primarily moved unconsciously by her love for the Good.¹⁷⁸

The experience of *Eros* begins with the experience of the lover for the beloved. Yet being captivated at the physical beauty of the beloved, is, according to Plotinus, not the fullest kind of love which can be realized. *'For since the soul is other than God but comes from him, it is necessarily in love with him and when it is there (LZ: unified with the One), it has heavenly love, but here (LZ: in material existence), love becomes vulgar...the soul then in her natural state is in love with God*

174 Treated in Chapter III.4.v. Plotinus explores the conception of superhuman love, *eros*, in three main treatises: *Enn.* III.5, VI.7 and VI.5.10. Secondary literature on Plotinus' doctrine of love: e.g.: J. Rist, *Eros and Psyche* (1967); *ibid*, *Augustine Deformed* (2014); R. Arnou, *Le désir de Dieu*; Pigler, *Plotin L'amour*; P. Hadot, *Plotin ou la simplicité du regard*, (Paris, 1993, 1997, 2010), 71-109.

175 On the Greek and Latin terminology of 'love': Plotinus' terminology consist of: *erôs*, *agápê* and *philia*: (e.g. *philia Enn.* VI.7.14.20 / *agape*: VI.8.15, 16.12-14). Rist identifies *agápê* in Plotinus as a veritable *erôs* (*Eros, Psyche*, 76-86). Pigler concurs. *Plotin, L'amour*, 28. In Plotinus, the term *erôs* is also synonymous with the terms he uses to express "desire" such as *epheis*, *pothos*, *orexis* and *hormê*. R. Arnou, *Le désir de Dieu*, 53-66; Plotinus' usage of these terms involves differences, but the differences are strongly nuanced and sometimes negligible. Arnou explains these in more detail.

176 E.g.: *Enn.* VI.8.15.1-5; VI.7.14; VI.7.22.20.

177 *Enn.* V.3.17.15-40, VI.7.22, 26-end.

178 *Enn.* VI.7.22.15-25, 35.20-24.

and wants to be united with him.' (Enn. VI.9.9.26-30, 34-35). *Eros*, as a divine force, drives human desire upwards to experience divine love. It moves the lover beyond human love because human love is merely an image of true love (VI.9.9.39-47). The soul desires to experience love even further. Ultimately she longs for union with the indefinite goodness of the One, which can only be realized in a higher level of consciousness (VI.7.22.15-25).

In order to reach the ultimate summit of love, the soul must first pass through the realm of the *Nous* and the eternal archetypal Forms. Hence, in order to intensify the experience of Love, the human soul needs to actualize her intellect, that is, to pursue the cultivation of its highest region. This entails exercising the mind in order to activate an intuitive, immediate grasping of the archetypal Ideas, Forms and Truth. *Eros* urges the soul to desire to see the eternal and unchangeable Forms more purely so that one's love not only becomes intensified but truer. In effect, the soul's initial desiring of physical beauty leads to the longing for the more magnificent beauty in the divine Intellect.¹⁷⁹

The spectacle of divine Beauty in the world of Forms, with their inexplicable charm *charis* radiated from the One, bedazzles the soul (VI.7.22.21). At this stage, the intellect enflames with love and the birth of true love takes place. '*For there in the realm of the Intellect is true delight and the greatest satisfaction, the most loved and longed for, which is not in the process of becoming or movement, but its cause (LZ: the One) is what colours and shines upon and glorifies the intelligibles.*' (VI.7.30.30-32). True love is non-appetitive, thus has no need.¹⁸⁰ When the focus of one's love and desires is on physical or exterior things, an individual is capable of sin. In the activity of being drawn to the immaterial beauty of one's origins, beyond oneself -as in intellectual vision- the soul could not sin.¹⁸¹

Desire, as an extension of *Eros*, is what initially conceives higher thought (V.6.5). Love also has to do with the approbation or judgment of what is ultimately good, the latter of which is the soul's desire and love (VI.7.20.22). One's longing for divine knowledge, is fulfilled by a vision of God which can increase with intensity. Attaining this vision and rising up to the ultimate source is the goal of life (III.8.5-7).

The experience of love by the human soul in the realm of the *Nous* mirrors the divine Intellect itself when it came into existence from the One. Plotinus describes the inception of the Intellect as a *Logos* or image of the One. The Intellect longed to know its source and so turned to it. When it was touched by it, it became drunk -as with nectar- with love and joy at this immediate contact without the presence of Thought and Ideas (VI.7.35.24-25). In falling in love, it went out of its mind as it were, carried off by (and to) the One (VI.7.36.15-20, esp. 19). Plotinus depicted the human intellect as understanding itself as an image of the *Nous*, imitating the Intellect's amorous and ecstatic contemplation of the One (as the Loving Intellect), while at the same time fascinated by the divine Life and Thought in itself (as the Thinking Intellect).

Eros as a dynamic movement which desires ultimate consummation of its love for beauty, is not truly gratified at the level of Intellect. When the beauty of the thinking Intellect and its Forms fills the human intellect with love, the soul realizes that this Beauty is actually just a resemblance of the highest Good (VI.7.15.9). Progressively the soul increases in likeness (*homoiotêta*) of the divine, first

179 'When anyone, therefore, sees this light, then truly he is also moved to the Forms and longs for the light which plays upon them and delights in it, just as with the bodies here below, our desire is not for the underlying material things but for the beauty imaged upon them. For each is what it is by itself; but it becomes desirable when the Good colours it, giving a kind of grace to them and passionate love (*erôs*) to the desirers. Then the soul, receiving into itself an outflow from thence, is moved and dances wildly and is all stung with longing and becomes love.' (Enn. VI.7.22.1-10)

180 e.g. Enn. VI.9.9.44-50, V.3.10.50-end; Rist, *Eros and Psyche*, 76-86, 183.

181 Treated in Chapter III.3.v. and Chapter IV.4.iii.

of the Intellect, then of the One. By making oneself as inwardly beautiful as possible, Plotinus states, a person can prepare himself for receiving the One and the truest love. Hence, once in the realm of the Intellect, in order to advance higher to the One, one must let go of all reason, Form and intellect. 'For this, since it (LZ: the One) is beauty most of all, and primary beauty, makes its lovers beautiful and lovable.' (Enn. I.6.7.30).

As such, Plotinus uses human love (love for each other) as a metaphor for the mystical union.¹⁸² When the One appears to the human soul, human love then disappears. In complete union with the One, there is nothing between the soul and the One, they are both one, no longer two. Two lovers in the world below imitate this in their will and desire to be united (VI.7.31). The human experience of the One is similar to the soul's experience of the *Nous*, only a momentary but not a definite unification or deification (VI.7.34-35). Plotinus described this as quiet ecstasy or bliss (VI.9.11).¹⁸³

4.ii.b. Augustine's Depiction of *Amor* ¹⁸⁴

Augustine's discussion of the theme of love¹⁸⁵ in *Trin.* VIII begins with an exploration of how the force of love plays a role in the human mind, specifically in the human image of God, the highest part of the soul, or the intellect. Here he describes how one can love God and how God is intelligible. God is love and the source and origin of all human love. God is Light, Truth, God is 'Good'. This 'Good' serves as criteria for our judgment. God as Love and Good can be contemplated in the eternal Forms. Hence by turning to God, the human being becomes good (*Trin.* VIII.2-6). Implied in this conception of 'God' is Christ the Son, as Wisdom, (VII.1.1-3.6) in whom the eternal Forms exist (VI.10.11-12, etc.) and the Holy Spirit as divine Love (XV.18.31, etc.).

Further, Augustine explores why we love other persons (*Trin.* VIII.6.9). This is because we see in another that she/he is just. Augustine states that what we love (or should love) in others is something immaterial and invisible. Like the Form Good mentioned above, the Form *Iusticia* is an eternal Idea, with no material counterpart. By loving the Form Justice -which is the equivalent of loving God, as when one loves the Form Good- a person can become just.¹⁸⁶ It appears here that 'being just' for Augustine involves honesty towards oneself and fairness towards others. He adds that we can see the perfect Form Justice without being perfectly just ourselves. By contemplating this Form we are able to see the degree of 'being just' in ourselves and can also love others for having this trait -or at least for their potential to become just. Augustine recommends this as one of the ways we can love

182 *Enn.* VI.7.34.5-16; IV.4.2.27-28; VI.9.9.39.

183 The content in this section is based upon the summary in my article "Aflame in love: St. Augustine's doctrine of *amor* and Plotinus' notion of *eros*", forthcoming in *Studia Patristica*.

184 Treated in Chapter V.3.iv. There is much literature on Augustine's doctrine of love. The most classic works are: J. Burnaby, *Amor Dei*; I. Bochet, *Saint Augustin: Le Désir de Dieu*, (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1982). Van Bavel, "Love", *AttA*, 509-516. R. Canning, *The Unity of Love for God and Neighbor in St. Augustine*, (Louvain: Augustinian Historical Institute, 1993); See also on the element love in *Trin.*: P. van Geest, *The Incomprehensibility of God: Augustine as a Negative Theologian*, (Louvain: Peeters, 2010), 101-106, 138 and 170-174.

185 For the word 'love': *amor*, *dilectio* and *caritas*. These terms are generally synonymous and used interchangeably by Augustine. In *Civ. Dei* XIV.7, Augustine explicates that these three terms in the Scriptures have synonymous meanings. See Chapter V.3.iv.b. Also: van Bavel, "Love", 509; D. Dideberg, in: *AL* (vol. 1: 1986-1994): "Amor", 294-300; "Caritas", 730-743; "Dilectio", 435-453. Augustine's terminology for the English word 'desire' are: *appetitus*, *concupiens*, *cupiens*.

186 Augustine's definition of being just: 'That man is just which knowingly and deliberately, in life and in conduct, gives each man what is his own...in order to owe no man anything but to love one another (Rom. 13:8). And how is one to cleave to that Form (Justice) except by loving it?' (*Trin.* VIII.6.9). In 1 John 2 and 29, the author writes that sin signifies committing acts of injustice. Whoever lives in God cannot sin or do injustice. Jesus is Justice, who takes away our sins.

ourselves as well as others -to love one's neighbor as oneself.¹⁸⁷ As such, spiritual love is without sin. In *Trin.* VIII.7.10, he speaks of true love, which is what one should search for and cleave to; in his mind true love is inseparable from living justly. He quotes a verse from 1 John 2:10: "*Whoever loves his brother,*" he says "*abides in the light and there is no scandal in him.*" It is clear that he (LZ: John) sets the perfection of justice in the love of one's brother;... In these ways, Augustine binds the Form Justice with true love.

Augustine's objective in *Trin.* VIII is to explain the triads in the inner man in which love and knowledge were the key elements. These two elements reflect in a vague way the divine consciousness, love and knowledge of the divine Trinity. Moreover, the elements love and knowledge in the *imago Trinitatis* derive from God who is Wisdom and Love as represented by the second and third Trinitarian Persons. To demonstrate that the Holy Trinity can be reflected in the human spirit, Augustine writes: '*...oh but you do see a Trinity, if you see charity.*' (VIII.8.12). Augustine illustrates this with an intramental triad *amans-quod amatur-amor*: the lover (as subject), that what he loves (as object) and love itself. The latter serves as the binding factor between the two. He then invents a new triad: I, as lover, -my neighbor, the other, -God. In both triads God or Love itself is the binding or unifying principle. One's love for another is equivalent to loving God because God is the source of all love. Our love for each other depends on God's gift of charity to us (VIII.8.12).

In describing the element love on the human level, he writes: '*What else is love, therefore, except a kind of "life" which binds and seeks to bind some two together, namely the lover and the beloved?... It remains to ascend even further and to seek for those higher things, insofar it is granted to man.*' (VIII.10.14) (McKenna) Further in *Trin.* IX-X, Augustine explains how self-love connects the mind to self-understanding or self-knowledge. Love and knowledge form an interdependent relationship with and in the mind, thereby forming a unity -a unity dimly mirroring the unity of the Holy Trinity. Longing to know something was not without love for the thing one longed to know (X.1.2). As such, love binds knowledge to the mind. For instance, when something is learned which is considered worthwhile, it will be retained because it pertains to the perfect, universal beauty of the Form (which exists in Christ) that is contemplated and loved (X.1.2). Truth and God are beautiful (VIII.3.4, 6.9, 7.10); as such, loving them binds them to oneself.

Love is actualized in the intellect when one's focus is able to shift from the self to God.¹⁸⁸ This shift occurs by the manifestation of God's will and grace. The Holy Spirit pours love and longings into human hearts which motivates the soul to search for God, the source of all love. God's love binds us to others (XV.18.31). Hence, in the same line of thinking, one can only love (and know) oneself through (knowing) God's love. Thus in experiencing God's love, self-love and love for others flow together, as if Augustine intended them to be indistinguishable. Augustine asserts that the search for God and God's love should be never-ending, one always finds God and experiences divine love which nourishes the longing to search further (XV.28.51).

Further, Augustine depicted longings, such as the longing for knowledge, self-knowledge or for God, as ultimately leading to happiness; while other longings -for things of a physical and transient nature- would lead to despair. This depends upon one's focus. If one's self-love were to be actualized in the sense of becoming an image of God, one's self-love must transform to loving one's neighbor. One would then do acts of good which would be beneficial to all instead of acts solely for the sake of self- enrichment (XII.9.14).

187 '*True love then is that we should live justly by cleaving to the truth...And if man is full of love, what is he but full of God?*' (*Trin.* VIII.7.10)

188 *Trin.* XI.6.10, XII.4.4 and XIV.2.4.

Augustine described true love for others, as oriented first to God. This love has no need, nor does it lead to sin, greed or selfishness, potentially present in the desire and pursuit of physical things (*Trin.* IX.8.13. 9.14).

4.iii. General Correspondences

In these two seemingly distinct expositions on love, there are marked similarities. The following inventory will proceed point by point, first in the context of human love (a.) and then love existing in the Godhead (b.).

4.iii.a. The Level of Human Love

In their depictions of the ascent to God, both thinkers advocated that the experience of love could lead to intellectual vision—a completely immaterial consciousness oriented to the divine in which the Forms or Ideas were contemplated. Love was actualized in intellectual vision.

The force of love was motivated by the experience of beauty on the sense level which carried one upwards. Love and desire, when steered properly by the individual will, that is, by turning one's focus upward to the source and the primary cause of all existence, drove one back to God. Turned to temporal things of matter or physicality, love could degrade into sin and evil-doings.¹⁸⁹ Augustine and Plotinus were greatly preoccupied with articulating sacred longings.¹⁹⁰

For both thinkers, Love was a purely spiritual (immaterial) substance which can be known in oneself or in one's mind only when one was involved in the activity of loving something or someone. The actualization of this love was loving immaterial things or souls in an incorporeal manner.¹⁹¹

Love was expansive and hence discontent with the limitations of transient beauty as object of desire. Plotinus expressed this in the following way: *'And as long as there is anything higher than that which is present to it, it naturally goes on upwards, lifted by the giver of its love.'* (*Enn.* VI.7.22.20). Augustine prayed to God in *Trin.* XV.28.51 that he would never stop desiring and loving God. Plotinus illustrated that the love experienced in the union with the One, longed to go even further, even though there was nothing further than the One.¹⁹²

The true object of one's desire was love itself which could only find true gratification in dwelling in God's abode of eternity and immutability, in other words in the abundance of love, peace and immortality. Love and truth were intricately connected.

Love, as a force driven by desire, was endowed to humans by the Godhead. Augustine wrote: *'Man has no capacity to love except from God. That is why he says a little later, "Let us love because he first loved us" (1 Jn 4:19). The apostle Paul also says: "The love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Rom 5:5).'* (*Trin.* XV.17.31). Plotinus expressed the same thought in this way: *'But there comes to be the intense kind of love for them (the Forms), not when they are what they are, but when, being already what they are, they receive something else from there beyond... (Enn. VI.7.21.12)...there is need of another light for the light...in them to appear...'* (*Enn.* VI.7.21.14-21).

If the individual was willing and was focused on God or the immaterial invisible objects of love, one was pulled upwards by love itself. (*Nb:* For Augustine, grace was necessary for this upward movement to occur.) Love and desire were the driving forces behind acquiring all kinds of

189 *E.g.*: *Trin.* XII.9.14-10.15; *Enn.* IV.8.4-5.

190 *E.g.*: *Trin.* IV.21.31 XII.14.22; *Enn.* VI.7.22.1-10.

191 Augustine attributed the strength for becoming celibate to God's grace, *Conf.* VIII.27-30.

192 *Enn.* III.5.7.7-26; VI.7.22.15-22.

knowledge.¹⁹³ Love itself led to self-knowledge, to knowledge of God and the purification of the soul. In this process, the soul became good and gradually more godlike. Thus the source as well as the goal of one's personal human love for both Augustine and Plotinus was transcendent divine love.¹⁹⁴ The pursuit of such made one happy and awakened the desire to share this love and expand it.

The image of God desired and cherished wisdom because only the search for wisdom and God brought gratification.¹⁹⁵ The intellect/image of God longed for eternal love and truth.

Plotinus spoke of unconscious love which moved the soul to the Intellect and One. '*...in this way the soul also loves the Good, moved by it to love from the beginning. And the soul which has its love already to hand does not wait for a reminder of the beauties here, but because it has its love, even if it does not know it has it, it is always searching and in its wish to be borne away to that Good...*' (Enn. VI.7.31.19-20).¹⁹⁶ In Augustine, the idea of unconscious love was implied in his inquiry, for example in *Trin.* VIII.4.6: '*How can we love something which we do not completely know?*' or '*What we are asking, though, is from what likeness or comparison of things known to us, we are able to believe, so that we may love the as yet unknown God.*' (*Trin.* VIII.5.8)

The following two points deal with self-love and triads, both of which require elucidation. The theme self-love in *Trin.* VIII-IX played a major role in Augustine's theology. It was a key focus of interest in his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis*: one's self-love was intertwined in self-knowledge: both of which were dependent upon the relationship with God. Self-love, which was given by God, could be extended to one's neighbor. As such one could love the other as much as one loved oneself. This was illustrated as well in the triad of lover, beloved and love itself. He also explained the negative consequences of excessive self-love.

Self-love was not so explicitly expressed in the *Enneads*, yet it was there by implication.¹⁹⁷ Plotinus mentioned it only once in a peculiar comment concerning the self-sufficiency of the One (see quote below).¹⁹⁸ It was also implied in the self-referencing of the *Nous*, its unity of self (Enn. VI.7.24) and in the experience of the *Nous* in the state of being turned to and unified in love with the One.¹⁹⁹ For Plotinus the individual soul's self-love would be an activity mirroring the Intellect, as in the Intellect contemplating the One, insofar the soul was able. In the *Nous*, self-knowledge was perfect and complete (as in the unity of the intellectual and the intelligible). The soul gained her true self-image

193 *Trin.* VIII and *Enn.* V.6.5

194 *Trin.* XV.17.31; *Enn.* VI.7.33.27-30.

195 *Trin.* IX.1.1, XV.1.1 and 2.2; *Enn.* V.1.4.1-20.

196 See also *Enn.* VI.7.22.15-25.

197 Occasionally Plotinus mentions self-love, such as in *Enn.* III.5.4.7-end. Here he questions whether love of self can be real. At the end of the chapter he affirms that because the self cannot be cut off from higher reality, self-love is related to the universal love of the World Soul. '*Let us grant, then, that the universal soul has universal love, and each of the partial souls its own particular love.*' (III.5.4.7) '*So this love here leads each individual soul to the Good and the love which belongs to the higher soul is a god, who always keeps the soul joined to the Good...*' (III.5.4.25).

198 *Enn.* VI.8.15, 1-5.

199 *Enn.* VI.7.24.24-27: '*...but if he (LZ: who contemplates the Forms) is stuck in a pleasureless state, why should he say they (LZ: the Forms) are good? Is it because he exists? What then would he gain from existence? What difference would there be in existing or altogether not existing, unless one makes affection for oneself the reason for all this?...*' Further up in VI.7.25, Plotinus refers to the self-unity in the *Nous*, regarding delight (gratification) as belonging to the desirer which is not the same as being unified with the One, the Good. (This is a knotty passage:) '*...but because he thought it was right that the good, since it had such a nature in itself, should of necessity be delightful and that the desired object must altogether hold delight for the one who is attaining or has attained it, so that who does not have delight does not have good, and so that if delight belongs to the desirer, it does not belong to the First; so that neither does the Good...(7-11). The Good therefore, must be desirable, but must not become good by being desirable, but become desirable by being good (17-18).*' See also below note 201 '*desiring is one with the object of desire*' (*Enn.* VI.8.15.1-8)

by contemplating and uniting with the *Nous*. Therefore, its self-actualization involved (albeit implicit) self-love. Plotinus did not speak extensively about the dangers involved in self-love, as Augustine did, yet he did remark extensively on audacity which led to self-isolation and sin.²⁰⁰

In the thought of Augustine and Plotinus, love was a binding factor illustrated in a triad. As already mentioned, 'love itself' was essentially understood as transcendent divine love. Augustine attempted to define love and in doing so, introduced the first 'trinity' which could be discovered in the human mind as a dim reflection of the Holy Trinity '*Now love is of someone who loves, and something is loved with love. So then there are three: the lover, the beloved and the love. What else is love, therefore, except a kind of life*²⁰¹ *which binds or seeks to bind some two together, namely the lover and the beloved?*' (*Trin.* VIII.10.14). Plotinus essentially utilized the same triad, yet in the context of the One: '*And he (LZ: the One) that same self, is lovable and love and love of himself in that he is beautiful and from himself and in himself.*' (*Enn.* VI.8.15.1-5).²⁰² Love, as a binding factor between the lover and the beloved, is illustrated in the following passage in the *Enneads*, in which Plotinus shows (as he does throughout this treatise) that the One is at the root of the love between the lover and the beloved:

The primary beautiful, then, and the first (LZ: The One) is without form, and beauty is that, the nature of the Good. The experience of lovers bears witness to this, that, as long as it is in that which has the impression received by the senses, the lover is not yet in love; but when from that he himself generates in himself an impression not perceptible by the senses in his partless soul, then love springs up. But he seeks to see the beloved that he may water him when he is withering. But if he should come to understand that one must change to that which is more formless (LZ: the One), he would desire that: for his experience from the beginning was love of a great light from a dim glimmer. (Enn. VI.7.33.21-30)

4.iii.b. Love in the Godhead

As discussed in section 2 of this chapter, there were, as expected, numerous differences in the conceptions of the Godhead of both thinkers, such as the hierarchy in Plotinus' system of Hypostases which contrasted with the equality of the Godhead in Augustine's thought. Also mentioned was the fact that Plotinus' first Hypostasis shared no common characteristics with Augustine's Holy Spirit, the Trinitarian Person most associated with divine love. Yet there were several aspects concerning divine love which merit our attention, as well as the characteristics applied to the One by Plotinus and the Holy Trinity by Augustine. These will be discussed here again, but first we will review other similarities, beginning with the most general ones.

200 *Enn.* IV.8.4. Treated in Chapter III.3.v.

201 There is a somewhat similar conception to Augustine's 'love is a kind of life' in the *Enneads*: '*But the division which is in Intellect is not of things confused, though of things existing in unity, but this is what is called the love in the All, not the love in this All; for this is an imitation, since it is a loving of all things which are separate, but true love is all things being one and never separated. (Enn. VI.7.14.19-25) ...15. This life then, multiple and universal and primary and one-who is there who when he sees it does not delight to be in it, despising every other life?*' (*Enn.* VI.7.15.1-2).

202 '*Kai erasmion kai erôs ho autos kai hautou erôs, hate ouk allôs kalos ê par'hautou kai en hautôi.*' (Treated in Chapter III.4.v.a.) Continuation of quote: '*For surely his keeping company with himself could not be in any other way than if what keeps company and what it keeps company with were one and the same. But if what keeps company with and what is, in a way, desiring is one with the object of desire, and the object of desire is on the side of existence and a kind of substrate, again it has become apparent to us that the desire and the substance are one.*' '*Kai gar kai to suneinai heautôi ouk an allôs echoi, ei mê to sunon kai to hôi sunestin hen kai tauton eiê. Ei de to sunon tôi hôi sunestin hen kai to hoion ephiemenon tôi ephetôi hen, to de...*' *Enn.* VI.8.15.1-8. See Tornau, "Eros versus Agape", 288-289.

The first has to do with true love and true beauty which exist in God and are co-extensive.²⁰³ God was the origin of all beauty.²⁰⁴ True love was also strongly associated with loving what is good; loving God as ultimate Good.²⁰⁵ The material supporting the association of love, good and truth is so extensive and lengthy that only a few salient quotes are given in the notes here. Yet some shorter passages are possible here too. For example, Augustine: *'But what is love or charity, which the Divine Scripture praises and proclaims so highly, if not the love of the good?'* (Trin. VIII.10.14). Plotinus: *'For this reason we must consider, too, that the love which good men in this world have is a love for that which is simply and really good, not just any kind of love.'* (Enn. III.5.7.31-32).

Closely associated to love and becoming good was the actualization of love by contemplating the Forms.²⁰⁶ Plotinus: *'For there in the realm of the Intellect is true delight and the greatest satisfaction, the most loved and longed for, which is not in the process of becoming or movement, but its cause (LZ: the One) is what colours and shines upon and glorifies the intelligibles.'* (Enn. VI.7.30.30-32).²⁰⁷ Augustine: *'Therefore, the more ardently we love God, so much the more certainty and calmly do we see Him, because we see the unchangeable Form of Justice in God, and we judge that men ought to live in conformity with it. Faith is therefore a powerful help to the knowledge and the love of God, not as though He were wholly unknown or wholly unloved, but that He may be known more clearly, and that He may be loved more fervently.'* (Trin. VIII.9.13). Hence, one could love God by seeing Him intelligibly in the Form.²⁰⁸

203 Augustine on how beauty on the sense level leads to love for God: *'Once more come, see if you can. (LZ: see that God is truth) You certainly only love what is good and the earth is good with its lofty mountains'* (LZ: Augustine gives a lengthy description of a number of different things which we can see which are good because they are either beautiful, pleasant and healthy and continues: *'...the heart of a friend is good with its sweet accord and loving trust and a just man is good... and a song is good with its melodious notes and its noble sentiments...Why go on and on?...Take away this and that [cf. Plotinus: Enn. V.3.17.39: "Take away everything!"] and see that good itself if you can. In this way you will see God...the good of every good. For surely among these things I have listed and whatever others can be observed or thought of, we would not say that one is better than the other when we make a true judgment unless we had impressed on us some notion of good itself by which we approve of a thing and also prefer one thing to another. This is how we should love God, not this or that good but Good itself, and we should seek the good of the soul, not the good it can hover over in judgment but the good it can cleave to in love and what is this but God?'* (Trin. VIII.3.4); Plotinus: *On Beauty*; V.8. *On Intelligible Beauty*, etc.

204 Augustine: Trin. VIII.3.4, 6.9, 7.10, XV.2.3, 4.6; Plotinus, *ibid*.

205 Augustine: e.g.: Trin. VIII.3.4., 4.5; Plotinus: throughout Enn. VI.7; Examples:

Augustine: *'You certainly only love what is good....And this is how we should love God, not this or that good but good itself, that we should seek the good in the soul, not the good it can hover over in judgment but the good it can cleave to in love, and what is this but God?'* (Trin. VIII.3.4); *'...there would be no changeable good things unless there were an unchangeable good. So when you hear a good this and a good that which can at other times also be called not good, if without these things that are good by participation in the good, you can perceive good itself by participating in which these other things are good-and you understand it together with them when you hear a good this or that-if then you can put them aside and perceive good itself, you will perceive God. And if you cling to him in love, you will straightaway enter into bliss (beatificaberis). But when other things are only loved because they are good, you should be ashamed of clinging to them that you fail to love the good itself which makes them good.'* (Trin. VIII.4.5);

Plotinus: *'...in this way the soul also loves that Good, moved by it to love from the beginning.'* (Enn. VI.7.31.18-19); *'And each and every thing's desire and birth-pangs of longing bear witness that there is some good for each.'* (Enn. VI.7.26.6-7).

206 Plotinus: Enn. VI.7.15; VI.7.25: desiring the Good to become Good and become god: Form makes matter good.; Enn. VI.7.27-28: Virtue associated with Form, as standard of judgment;

207 Other correspondences in Plotinus are plentiful: e.g.: Enn. VI.7.15-17: Contemplating the Idea Good makes one good. (Good is a Form existing in the *Nous*: *agathoeidê*); The Intellect received the Ideas which are Good from the One, the Good. (Even though the One is formless); Enn. VI.7.9: Why desire the Good? *'All things desire the Good,...they seek Intellect for their reasoning.'* But the Good is before Reason (The One) (VI.7.20.20-25); Desiring the Good (One) is always for the better. Note that in Plotinus, Good and matter are opposites. The Form of Good *agathoeidê* also manifests in matter: which means that the formation of matter makes matter better (Enn. VI.7.28.20-25). For the soul, Virtue is as Form a standard of judgment of what is good (Enn. I.3.4-6). These aspects are found in Augustine's teachings as well.

208 Translation McKenna; See also: Trin. VIII.6.9, XV.15.25, 16.26.

These last few points require a brief elucidation. Augustine's assertions that God could be seen in the Form²⁰⁹ related directly to the *Verbum Dei* which was explicitly identified as the Form principle.²¹⁰ In turn, this recalled Plotinus' *Nous* as the domain of the Forms; as well as Plotinus' statements that all desires ultimately lead to the Good -to the Form of the Good (that is: to the Form Good in the *Nous: Enn.* VI.7.21, 28). The Form Good was in Intellect, yet the highest ultimate Good was associated with the One, which stood above all Reason and Form. As illustrated in Chapter III.4.v.d. and e., for Plotinus, *Eros* was experienced passionately in the beauty of the Intellect and the Forms, yet desire for the highest Love would lead to the One, the union of which provided more of a climax than the second Hypostasis. It was the presence of ultimate Good in the divine Intellect which motivated souls to desire to go further than actualizing their intellects.²¹¹

As a continuation on his exposition of seeing God in the Form, Augustine emphasized that loving God would lead to a better mental conception or understanding of God: the more passionate we loved God, the more we could 'see God' (*Trin.* VIII.4.6). He used in this context as example the immutable Form of Justice (such as in *Trin.* VIII.6.9 and the quote above -VIII.9.13). In stating that God could be seen in the Form, Augustine also meant that Form represented an ideal which one strived to become: such as being just, good or loving. In order to become good (or become godlike) one loved the Forms Justice,²¹² Good or Love itself because the soul ultimately perceived God there. Thus for Augustine love for God or something or someone always entailed love for the Form. These accentuations were evident in Plotinus as well, referred to in the notes, although the association of Love and Justice was not made. (This significant point will be elaborated further in (iv.c.) 'Differences'.

There are more salient differences to mention here which intertwine with the correspondences. The first difference, already mentioned in the introduction, was Plotinus' notion of the One, the first Hypostasis, which was designated as the source of all Love and Augustine's assertion that God was Love and Good, in that divine Love was associated with the third Person, the Holy Spirit.²¹³ The difference here was that Holy Spirit represented Love between the Father and the Son and poured love into human hearts as a gift of God.²¹⁴ Yet, similar to the One, the Holy Spirit represented not only divine Love but Will.²¹⁵ On the other hand, Augustine identified the entire Trinity with Love and Will

209 Treated in Chapter V.2.v.; 3.iv.d.; e.g.: *Trin.* VIII.2.6, 6.9.

210 Treated in Chapter IV.2.ii.; e.g.: *Gen. litt.* I-II or II.8.17; *Conf.* XI.2-9; Chapter V.2.i.; e.g. *Trin.* XV.16.26.

211 '...and the things which have intellect do not stop there, but again seek Good, and they seek Intellect from their reasoning but the Good even before reason. And if they also seek life, and everlasting existence and activity, what they desire is not Intellect in so far as it is Intellect, but in so far as it is good and from the Good and directed to the Good; since this is so also with life.' *Enn.* VI.7.20.20-end. Also *Enn.* VI.7.27.1-10.

212 Cf. Plotinus: *Enn.* I.3.2-6.

213 *Trin.* e.g.: XV.18.31, Treated in Chapter V.2.ii. and vi.

214 As stated in *Rom.* 5:5; *Trin.* XV.17.31, 18.32, 19.37.

215 Plotinus also associates the One with 'Will' in *Enn.* VI.8.: *On Free Will and the Will of the One.* (Cf: Rist, *Deformed*, 64, note 4). Armstrong's introductory remarks on this treatise on i.e., Plotinus' attributing Will to the One, are interesting to include here. The two treatises *Enn.* VI.7 and VI.8 'together contain the profoundest and most powerful expression of the thought of Plotinus about the One or Good. This First Principle is spoken of here in more strongly positive terms than anywhere else in the *Enneads*: the language of will and love and thought is used about him. And he appears as something more like a 'personal God' than he does elsewhere in the *Enneads*. But, as Plotinus makes clear in this treatise, this positive emphasis is in no way intended to be inconsistent with the negative way of approach to the One on which he so strongly insists. It is rather a powerful contribution to that negating of negations which the later Neo-Platonists showed clearly was the final stage on the negative way and was necessary to attain that fruitful and illuminating silence in which alone the One can be contemplated.' Armstrong believes that Plotinus' assertion of the absolute freedom of God's will must come from a Christian source, although he admits that this view has not been generally accepted ("Two Views of Freedom" in: *Studia Patristica* XVIII, 1982, 397-406). 'It is in doing this that he uses language more likely than anything else in the *Enneads* to commend his version of Platonism to theists (Platonists, Jewish or Christian) accustomed to think of God as a Supreme Being possessed of intelligence and will; though, as has already been said, he is careful to show that this positive language is in no way inconsistent with his negative theology.' (*Enneads*, vol. VII. 223, 224).

because of the equality of all three divine persons. We see here again that Augustine's description of the Holy Trinity indeed bore many similarities to the One. His statements on God's Love (as Trinity) relates to Plotinus' depiction of *Eros* when it was stated that love itself and the object of love were the same in the One (*Enn.* VI.8.15). An additional important correspondence is that for Plotinus, the source of ultimate love and beauty was beyond Intellect and the Ideas and in the range of utter incomprehensibility. The aspect of incomprehensibility of the Godhead also applied to Augustine's doctrine of Trinity, which was likewise the ultimate source of all love and beauty (*Trin.* VI.10.12). Additionally, we can also conclude that Augustine's conception of the divine Trinity, was, like Plotinus' One, a self-referencing transcendent unity of love.²¹⁶ Note however that for Augustine, the divine or 'God' was an undifferentiated, non-hierarchic realm, unlike Plotinus' conception. Yet both thinkers designated the One and the Holy Spirit as 'givers of love'.²¹⁷

Although Plotinus declared that the One was the source of Love, he was prudent in claiming that the One and Love were necessarily one and the same. This was impossible because the One could have no predicates (*Enn.* VI.7.38). When the *Nous* came into existence as a *Logos* or Image of the One, the energy or unlimited life of the One was transmitted through the energy of the *Logos*, resulting in Thought, Love and Life in the Intellect. Subsequently, Love, as well as Desire for the One, Beauty, Life and Being were transmitted from the *Nous* to the Soul and further down to the lower levels of matter. In this way, Plotinus did positively consider the One as the source of the divine forces of Love and Desire (=desire to know the source).

In section 2.iii of this chapter on the Godhead, many resemblances were shown between Augustine's and Plotinus' depictions of the relationship between the first and second divine Persons/Hypostases, the *Verbum Dei* and the *Nous*. This relationship is also relevant here in the context of love. In Plotinus, Love came into Being when the *Nous* contemplated its source in the beginning of its existence, as in 'The Desiring or Loving Intellect' (*Enn.* VI.7.35.20-24, etc). Similarly, for Augustine, divine love was the product of the love between the first and second divine Persons, God the Father and the Son-yet manifesting in the third Person. Common to both thinkers, the human soul could ascend or come to know the first Person/Hypostasis, by imitating the second.

A major difference in Augustine's perspective is that divine love was transmitted to human hearts directly through the missions of the Holy Spirit or Christ, which entailed their descent to the human world (*Trin.* XV.18.34). In sum, the notion of love for both Augustine and Plotinus was the central element in their doctrines of the image of God next to acquiring knowledge of God-both of which facilitated the ascent. Originating in God, it drove the soul to seek knowledge which expanded the consciousness, leading to unification with the Godhead. Augustine quoted Paul, that without love, one's knowledge and talents meant nothing (*Trin.* XV.18.32). In fact, this held true for Plotinus as well. Love (of beauty) was the compelling force behind acquiring higher, immaterial wisdom, the utmost legitimization of a philosopher (*Enn.* I.3.2).

216 I argue here against Tornau, who illustrated this aspect in the context of the differences between Augustine and Plotinus' conceptions of love in the Godhead in "*Eros versus Agape*", 288-289.

217 These examples were already quoted in this previous section. Plotinus: *Enn.* VI.7.22.19-20: 'And as long as there is anything higher than that which is present to it, it naturally goes on upwards, lifted **by the giver of its love**'; Augustine: 'Man has no capacity to love except from God. That is why he says a little later, "Let us love because he first loved us" (1 Jn 4:19). The apostle Paul also says: "The love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit **which has been given to us**" (Rom 5:5).' (*Trin.* XV.17.31; see also *Trin.* XV.18.32).

4.iv. General Differences

The correspondences listed above regarding human and divine love are so plentiful that it will not be possible to analyze each of these general statements or individual quotes in order to pinpoint all the differences between Augustine and Plotinus' notion of love. Moreover, if we were to analyze these more closely, we would indeed uncover numerous gray areas or overlaps, in which minor differences occur. Therefore, what interests us now is pinpointing the stark, black/white differences, as this is the real challenge. It will prove more efficient to treat the differences by discussing separate themes and only those which are of the greatest importance. They include the following: (a.) the personal human element in the Godhead of Love, (b.) faith and love; (c.) Justice and Love; (d.) loving one's neighbor, and (e.) prayer, love and desire.

4.iv.a. The Personal, Human Element in the Godhead of Love²¹⁸

The first major difference had to do with the Godhead, represented as divine love. What was missing for Augustine in Plotinus' philosophy was an explicit human or personal redemptive element in the Godhead of Love, the Son of God, Christ.²¹⁹ Jesus Christ had become a real person of flesh and blood, exemplifying the life of a human on earth in his suffering of injustice.²²⁰ He sacrificed himself for the sins of the world, out of his love for the world. He exemplified what a human was destined to become: a perfect Image of God. Christ's life on earth was a model of virtuous, selfless living; and a model of how to resurrect, become immortal (*Trin.* I.6.10) and godlike in the afterlife.²²¹ Christ was the model of Love and Justice.²²² The Son's further mission within the Holy Trinity, together with the Holy Spirit, was to bring human souls to contemplation of God-to an experience of God's love.²²³ Divine love was transmitted to human hearts directly through the missions of the Holy Spirit or Christ, in their descent to the human world. In Augustine's view, the whole Trinity loved and cared for its creation (*Trin.* I.10.20). But the three Hypostases in Plotinus' philosophy did not incarnate or descend to the human world, nor did they play a direct salvific role. They were not involved in a direct way with loving their creation.²²⁴

218 See Zwollo "Aflame in love: St. Augustine's doctrine of *amor* and Plotinus' notion of *Eros*" in: *Studia Patristica* Papers presented at the 16th international conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 2015) forthcoming.

219 *Conf.* VII.9.13; Chapter II.1ii.a.

220 E.g.: *Trin.* XII.10.13, XIII.16.21.

221 *Trin.* IV.2.4, 4.7, VII.1.1.

222 e.g.: *Trin.* IV.2.4, 3.6, XV.17.31.

223 *Trin.* I.8.16-18, 1.9.10.20; XIII.19.24. This entails as well the necessity of divine assistance, grace.

224 E. Emilsson: '...the notion of the divine in major thinkers in the Christian tradition, such as St. Augustine, has indeed been heavily coloured by Plotinus' notion of Intellect. We should however be on our guard in transferring features of the Christian God to the Intellect. The latter, for instance, lacks all the personal characteristics of the former.' *Plotinus on Intellect*, (Oxford: University Press, 2007) 5; See Rist: '...the love of human persons seems to have no privileged status in the Platonic tradition.' (*Ancient Thought Baptized*, 160, 148-202). However, Rist overlooks Plotinus' statement that the One gives undiminishing love to all which is beneath it (e.g.: *Enn.* VI.7.22.20).

4.iv.b. 'Love your neighbor'²²⁵

On this point there are some major differences as to how Augustine elaborated on love as deriving from the divine. He made much effort in explaining that divine love enabled us to 'love our neighbor'. Loving others was not absent in Plotinus' treatises on *Erôs* and the One (Chapter III.4.v.c.). Additionally Porphyry explained in *Vita Plotini* 2 and 13 that his teacher's activities in contemplation and teaching philosophy never hindered him from taking those in need under his wing. Plotinus was generous to the extreme in his charity for others. Ironically, minimal space was devoted to this theme in the *Enneads*. Furthermore, Plotinus expressed that whoever was disposed to philosophy, was already separated from the sense world and had no need to first pass through human love in order to attain divine love (*Enn.* I.3). A philosopher had already reached the awareness of the spiritual world by his having contemplated the Ideas. Love was the thrust of mystical union, yet he only needed to be guided by sciences and virtues, which permitted the ascent to the One by means of dialectic.

In Plotinus' descriptions of the union with the One, human love was more of an earthly metaphor.²²⁶ Did Plotinus believe that all love between human souls fell under the illusions of the physical plane of existence? E. Song interprets Plotinus' philosophy more in the light of Porphyry's account than his colder statements on the needs of a philosopher.²²⁷ Yet Song's study represents a minority standpoint and cannot be corroborated here. Plotinus did devote much attention to caring for one's own soul (as Socrates advocated). He believed that true happiness was derived from the longing to be one with God; true love meant being united with the One- the experience of divine Love in oneself- thus not outside of oneself. In fact Plotinus stated in VI.8.15 that the One's love was primarily love of itself: its love was self-directed and as such was wholly without needs. In short, the ultimate experience of love in Plotinus seemed to be predominantly experienced by a person alone with the *Nous*²²⁸ or with the One (*Enn.* VI.9.11). Plotinus rarely spoke of the One's or the *Nous*' love for the world or of anything suggestive of their love for individuals or humanity,²²⁹ outside of the

225 Augustine: 'True love then is that we should live justly by cleaving to the truth and so for the love of men by which we wish them to live justly, we should despise all mortal things. In this way, we will be ready and able even to die for the good of our brethren, as the Lord Jesus Christ taught us by example. And while 'there are two commandments from which the whole law and the prophets depend', (Mt. 22:40) love of God and love of neighbor, scripture not unsuitably often puts just one for both of them. Sometimes just love of God, like "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God" (Rom 8:28); and again, "Whoever loves God is known by Him." (1 Cor 8:3) and, "Since the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom 5:5) and many other instances, because if a man loves God then it follows that he does what God has commanded and loves God to the extent that he does this; it follows that he loves his neighbor too, because God has commanded this. (LZ: more biblical examples follow: Gal 6:42, 5:14; Mt. 7:12). And we find many other cases in the sacred writings where only love of neighbor seems to be required of us for perfection and the love of God seems to be passed over in silence, though the law and the prophets depend on both commandments. But this is because if a man loves his neighbor, it follows that above all, he loves love itself. "But God is love and whoever abides in love abides in God." (1 John 4:16). So it follows that above all, he loves God.' (*Trin.* VIII.7.10).

226 e.g.: *Enn.* I.3, III.5.1 and 4, VI.9.9.30-31, VI.9.11, VI.8.15.

227 Song recognizes the discrepancies of these statements in the *Enneads* yet he has discovered passages which he thinks suggest an ethic of caring for others. As such, Song argues against the consensus in scholarship. *Aufstieg und Abstieg der Seele Diesseitigkeit und Jenseitigkeit in Plotins Ethik der Sorge* (Göttingen: Vanderhoek & Ruprecht, 2009). Pigler argues that human love is seen as the departure point in Plato's philosophy because true love leads to the Good and love of wisdom. Plotinus' thought does not expound human love as a finality (*Plotin, L'amour*, 17). She also refers to the discussion between Trouillard and Hadot whether mystic experience in the *Enneads* necessarily transcends human love.

228 However, the intelligible world of *Nous* was sometimes depicted as Heaven, inhabited by the gods (*Enn.* V.8.ch.3-4).

229 In his latest study, *Augustine Deformed* 2014, Rist refers to *Enn.* VI.8 in which Plotinus treats *i.a.* will and love (the *Eros* of the One), and concludes, that if Augustine had read this he would have found much to applaud, as he would have recognized many Trinitarian parallels. However, the love of the One according to Plotinus is only directed to himself but not to his 'products.' (*Augustine Deformed*, 64, note 4); Rist adds that Augustine had to think about resolving the problem of impersonality of Plotinus' notion of *Eros* (*Augustine Deformed*, 71-83).

emanation of these qualities from the Godhead. We can thus maintain that in Plotinus' writings, he did not devote much attention to the subject of human love or relations nor to sympathizing with the difficult lot of others.²³⁰

On the other hand, Augustine elaborated love for one's neighbor as a natural consequence when loving God or experiencing God's love (as in his illustration of the triad of lover, beloved and Love itself-God in *Trin.* VIII).²³¹ He even went so far as to pronounce human love as equivalent to divine love, provided that divine love was experienced first (*Nb.*: the other way around, loving others and believing that this sufficed for love of God, he deemed as false).²³² Augustine also emphasized the importance of humility in the act of being charitable. In turn, one could imitate Christ in the sense of loving others as He loves us.²³³ We could definitely say that love, for both Augustine and Plotinus, was the central element in their doctrines of the image of God-intellect next to acquiring knowledge of God and the ascent. Yet human love was for Augustine a crucial theme. His accent on loving others as a result of loving God and oneself represents a major correction and improvement on Plotinus' doctrine of *Eros*.

4.iv.c. Justice and Love

For Augustine, the Idea Justice was associated with love in a number of ways. We loved others because they were just and good.²³⁴ The criteria for being just was determined by the Idea Justice. Attaining truth entailed loving Justice and loving the Good. God was absolute Justice and Love.²³⁵ Justice was also important in Plotinus' ethics: becoming a good person involved assimilating the Good by contemplating the Ideas, Good and Justice.²³⁶ Becoming a good person was also realized by contemplating the Virtues (*Enn.* I.2.6, I.3) which would likewise bring about a purification of the soul. This contemplation would also incur self-control, lead to right action, the avoidance of sin and to becoming godlike (*Enn.* I.2.4-6). Becoming a good person was also effectuated by the experience of the total love of the first Principle, the Good. Thus, by association, one could connect the two elements Justice and Love in Plotinus' philosophy although he did not seem to explicitly do so himself.²³⁷

In the eyes of Augustine, this insufficient explication in the *Enneads* would have serious consequences, because it meant that there was no direct connection between living justly and loving one's neighbor, which was of utmost importance for obtaining peace in the world. Thus he emphasized further than Plotinus that in order to become a more perfect image of God, the Idea Justice would naturally also play an important role in one's social relations. We must not only love others for their goodness, he encouraged, but also for their love of and striving for justice, in the sense of their honesty and fairness. Moreover Christ represented ultimate Justice and Charity in his unfailing forgiveness of sins. And Christ, who was *n.b.* not present in Plotinus' philosophy, served as our model of Justice and Love.²³⁸

230 R. Ferwerda, "Pity in the life and Thought of Plotinus" in: D. Runia (ed.) *Plotinus Amid Gnostics and Christians* (Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, 1984) 53-62. Ferwerda (translator of the *Enneads* into Dutch) paints a glum picture of Plotinus' view of concern for others.

231 See Rist on Augustine's exegesis of the commandment, love thy neighbor, (*Ancient Thought Baptized*, 159-168).

232 Cf: van Bavel, "Double Face of Love"; Teske, "Love of Neighbor in Augustine"; Canning, *Unity of Love*

233 E.g.: *Trin.* XV.17.31.

234 'Whoever therefore loves men should love them either because they are just or in order that they might become just. This is how he ought to love himself,...in this way he can love his neighbor as himself.' (*Trin.* VIII. 6.9)

235 'So then a man who is believed to be just is loved and appreciated according to that form and truth which the one who is loving perceives and understands in himself; but this form and truth cannot be loved and appreciated according to the standard of anything else.' (*Trin.* VIII. 6.9)

236 Burnaby recognized the importance of *Enn.* I.2.7 for Augustine (*Amor Dei*, 192-193).

237 Justice was however identified with Beauty (*Enn.* V.5.1.40-42) -and Beauty is what incites love.

238 e.g.: *Trin.* IV.2.4, 3.6, XV.17.31.

4.iv.d. Faith and Love

As mentioned in section 3.iii.d of this chapter, Augustine added a new element to his Plotinian epistemology, namely the importance of faith: *credo ut intellegam*.²³⁹ In *Trin.* VIII.3.4-6, Augustine questioned whether it was possible to love something which one did not know. If this were possible, how then was it possible to love God? His response was (relayed in a condensed form in VIII.3.4) ‘Yet unless we love him, even now, we shall never see him.’ Hence, faith was for Augustine instrumental for loving something or someone whom one did not or could not know completely, such as God.

In the context of loving God in *Trin.* VIII, he also stressed that faith stimulated love for the Form. One’s faith, as revealed in the Scriptures, increased loving God and would then lead to a better mental conception or understanding of God. The more passionately we loved God, the more we would ‘see God’, for example, in the immutable Form of Justice and where the shortcomings of our own practice of living justly was evident.²⁴⁰ Augustine also emphasized the importance of faith in the act of loving and in the act of loving truth; a faith which would eventually lead to the understanding and contemplation of the desired, ultimate truth. He also underlined the importance of the biblical triad faith, hope and love (for example in *Trin.* VIII.4.6): a consciousness which would enable humans to persevere through the difficulties of this life; a life which we are merely passing through on our way to the ultimate eternal reality (XIV.2.4). Thus he stressed the necessity of persisting in longing for this destination and keeping this faith. As mentioned in the previous section on Epistemology, it was unclear as to what extent the element faith played a role in Plotinus’ ascent to the divine through knowledge, that is, the contemplation of the Ideas. The aspect of faith combined with love does not seem directly present in the treatises of the *Enneads* studied here. This aspect requires further research.

4.iv.e. Prayer, Love and Desire

On this last point we can be brief. The last chapter of *Trin.* ended with a ‘Prayer to the Trinity’.²⁴¹ For Augustine, prayer was a personal expression of desire and love, a way in which the good functioning will with its focus on God could attain the consciousness of the *imago Trinitatis*, the intuitive and immediate apprehension of Truth by God’s Illumination. Augustine must have added this prayer to the end of *Trin.* in order to show the activity of prayer as the way to attain the goals which he prescribed in his doctrine of the *imago Trinitatis*: to increase one’s resemblance to God.²⁴² In this context he associated the activity of prayer with the process of seeking and finding, longing for and receiving some degree of gratification in pursuing knowledge of God. This point was already mentioned in 3.iii.e. of this chapter in the comparison of the epistemologies and the ‘Differences’. Plotinus did in fact call upon the gods for help to resolve a philosophical inquiry. Yet the question was ultimately resolved by his own deep concentration and analysis.²⁴³ Plotinus would not have objected to praying to God, in his desire to know the causes of existence and ascending to the One. The latter

239 Augustine: ‘So then, since we desire to understand as far as it is given us the eternity and equality and unity of the trinity, and since we must believe before we can understand, we must take care that our faith is not fabricated. This is the trinity we are to enjoy in order to live in bliss: but if we have false beliefs about it, our hope is in vain and our charity is not chaste.’ (*Trin.* VIII.5.8).

240 Augustine: ‘...the more brightly burns our love for God, the more surely and serenely we see him, because it is in God that we observe that unchanging Form of Justice which we judge that a man should live up to. Faith therefore is a great help for knowing and loving God, not as though he were altogether unknown or altogether not loved without it, but for knowing him all the more clearly and loving him all the more firmly.’ (*Trin.* VIII.4.5)

241 *Trin.* XV.28.51. (Treated in Chapter V.3.iv.h.).

242 See Zwollo ‘Prayer, Desire’, forthcoming.

243 *Enn.* III.7.11,8; IV.9.4.6; V.1.6.9; V.8.9.13.

involved *n.b.* the difficult task of (momentarily) stripping the soul of everything she already knows. It would also have not been alien to Plotinus, in light of his insistence of the soul's dependence on the Hypostases, that he would pray to the gods for assistance to be able to experience divine love on the most unfathomable realm. However, praying as a form of loving, worshipping God or as a form of turning one's desires to God was simply not expressed in the *Enneads* to the extent that Augustine suggested in *Trin.* This point thus constitutes at first sight a gray area and not a major difference between them.

However, seen in another light, we could judge this differently. This study has only confronted Augustine's doctrine of prayer through the passages at the end of *Trin.* or in a general sense, such as mentioning *Conf.* in which he is continuously in dialogue with God. It is now timely to take Augustine's other works into account here in which he treated prayer more extensively and where prayer is strongly associated with desire and longing for God. It will bring us to a distinction in Augustine's world view which has already been touched upon in this chapter and will be a major factor in the following section, indeed constituting a major distinction from Plotinus.

It concerns the communal context in which Augustine wove the activity of prayer and the aspect of desire, which has a number of different facets. For example in *Ennarrationes in psalmos* 42.1, he described how prayer joined persons together in Christ. Augustine described Christ as encompassing all time and space and as already praying, lamenting and exulting in the psalms even before humanity began to do so.²⁴⁴ Thus, when the faithful prayed, they were not separated from Christ's prayers. Jesus prayed for us and IN us. We prayed in Him and through Him. Augustine considered all our prayers as a continuation of Christ's prayers for the whole human race.²⁴⁵ In this way, all Christians shared in the *Christus totus*.²⁴⁶ Praying the psalms, according to Augustine, brought a person to Christ's mind, which in turn, enhanced one's longing.²⁴⁷ Being in union with Christ's mind also perpetuated a feeling of unity with one's fellow humans and also with those who had gone before us in faith, because the words of the psalms have been shared for centuries. As such, the prayer of the individual was linked to the prayer of all members of the entire church (*Enn. Ps.* 86.1.)

As we have seen in the subsection above, *caritas* for Augustine was a gift from God which moved, transformed and purified the soul; it incited one to desire unity with God. Thus, the activity of praying was involved with *caritas* in that it united the faithful first of all in love with Christ. It then united the person doing the praying with others in love. We have already recognized Plotinus' neglect to explain the significance of loving and caring for others in his teaching. The unity of God and others through love and desire as well as the collective wholeness it subsumed through the activity of prayer was indeed lacking in a major way in the *Enneads*.

244 P. van Geest, "Transformation in Order and Desire. Thomas a Kempis' Indebtedness to St. Augustine", in: J. Frishman, W. Otten and G. Rouwhorst, *Religious Identity and the Problem of Historical Foundation*, (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 438-456, 442-454.

245 See also e.g.: *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 85.1; T.J. van Bavel, "The 'Christus Totus' idea: A Forgotten Aspect of Augustine's Spirituality" in: T. Finan and V. Twomey (eds.), *Studies in Patristic Theology*, (Dublin: Four Courts, 1998) 84-94; *Ibid: The Longing of the Heart: Augustine's Doctrine on Prayer*, (Louvain: Peeters, 2009), 135-150.

246 'Let us manifest our joy and let us be thankful because not only we have been made Christians, but we have also become Christ. ...Be astonished and be glad at this: we have become Christ. For if He is the Head, we are the members: this whole Man, He and us.' (*In Iohannis euangelium tractatus* 21.8). The quote is from van Bavel, "Christus Totus", 86.

247 Van Bavel, "Christus Totus", 91; M. Schrama, *Augustinus, De binnenkant van zijn denken*, (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 1999, 2002), 219; Van Geest, "Order, Desire", 453-454.

4.v. Synthesis of Section 4 on Love

The similarities between Augustine's notion of *amor* and Plotinus' *Eros* were numerous. In the 'General Correspondences' from section 4.iii, the following conclusive statements were drawn in the comparison between Plotinus *Eros* and Augustine's *amor* at the human level:

- Love was actualized in intellectual vision.
- The force of love was motivated by the experience of beauty on the sense level which carried one upwards. Both Augustine and Plotinus were greatly preoccupied with sacred longings.
- Love was a purely spiritual, immaterial substance which could be known in oneself or in one's mind in the activity of loving. The actualization of this love was loving immaterial things or souls in an incorporeal manner.
- Love, as a force driven by desire, was endowed to humans by the Godhead.
- Love itself led to self-knowledge, to knowledge of God and the purification of the soul. In this process, the soul became good and gradually more godlike. Thus the source as well as the goal of one's personal human love according to Augustine and Plotinus was transcendent, divine love.
- Both thinkers spoke of love which moved the soul unconsciously upwards.
- The theme self-love played a major role in Augustine's theology. It manifested as well in Plotinus' philosophy, yet was not so explicitly expressed as in Augustine's *Trin.*
- In both theologies, love was expressed as a binding factor in a triad.

In examining *amor* and *Eros* in the Godhead, we saw the following similar conceptions:

- True love and true beauty existed in God; they were co-extensive.
- God was the origin of all beauty.
- True love was strongly associated with loving what was good. Loving God was articulated as the ultimate Good. Similarities involving the association of love, good and truth were in the works of both thinkers especially extensive.
- The actualization of love was accomplished by contemplating the Forms

Augustine's description of the Holy Trinity showed many similarities to Plotinus' One. To give some examples: just as the One, Augustine's entire Trinity was identified with Love and Will; love itself and the object of love were the same in the One and essentially in Augustine's divine Trinity as well. As sources of ultimate love and beauty, they were beyond the comprehension of the human mind.

There were also a number of differences which we could characterize as minor. These were points of difference embedded in many other similarities, yet were nonetheless significant to mention here. For instance, the difference in the notion of faith in the epistemology of Augustine was designated in section 3.iii.d. and iv. as a minor point. Yet when considered in the context of the conception of love, the combined idea of faith and love appeared indeed to be even more remote in the *Enneads*. This applied as well to the point on prayer in the context of desire and love. Nor did *Eros* in combination with the Idea Justice occur explicitly in the *Enneads*, at least not in the treatises on *Eros* which were studied here.

The greatest difference in both thinkers on love had to do with the point on human love. There was no personal or human element of love in Plotinus' conception of Godhead. Plotinus did not make charity and helping or caring for others an explicit part of his philosophy. Nor did he imply that the Godhead was directly involved with individuals, loving them as their creation. These three points

contrasted greatly with Augustine's statements on the equivalence of God's love and human love; or on self-love and loving God which was a prerequisite to loving others. Not only did Augustine accentuate human love more than Plotinus, he also stressed the communal aspects of love which led to social cohesion: such as loving Christ together with other faithful in prayer; sharing faith, hope and love in an ecclesiastical milieu, anticipating the ultimate contemplation of God and resurrection in the afterlife. These were absent in Plotinus' teaching on *Erôs*. In the synthesis at the end of this chapter these factors will be considered among the other major differences pinpointed in the four sections of the comparison. It will also be regarded in the conclusions of the first and second inquiries in Chapter VII.

5. The Ascent

5.i. Introduction

Reflecting on all the material treated thus far, we can summarize Augustine's and Plotinus' doctrines of imaging of the divine as encompassing essentially intellectual vision, in which one perceived oneself as image of God. Intellectual vision and the ascent were in both Augustine's and Plotinus' works inseparable. Both were instigated by the desire to know and to experience love on a deeper and higher level. As such one's love became actualized in the intellect. Intellectual vision was an experience above normal consciousness in which the soul was immediately present to oneself (instead of being present to the world). It always involved the contemplation of God or the Ideas. The vision described by both thinkers tended to be momentary yet so intense that one was not likely to forget it. It advanced one's knowledge of self and of the divine, by an intuitive grasp of truth. More pronounced in Augustine was the suggestion that intellectual vision could occur in various intensities. Plotinus often wrote of the intellect as being immediately conscious of the whole intelligible world and one with it. Yet both prescribed the soul's gradual development of her intellect, to its fullest actualization.

The term 'ascent' was accompanied by a number of synonyms: such as 'return to the source', or to 'the Fatherland', or the 'vision of God', which were utilized by both alike.²⁴⁸ Accounts of the ascent of the soul were abundant in Augustine's and Plotinus' works. Nor was there any shortage of secondary literature on the subject; it is likely one of the most frequent commented subjects on Augustine and Plotinus.

We have already seen that in both thinkers the consciousness of the intellect had a strong relationship to the second Person or Hypostasis, which in turn was strongly connected to the first Person/Hypostasis, its Father. We have also seen that both described that ascent to God in terms of knowledge and love. In this section, the accounts of the ascent by Plotinus and Augustine will be reviewed and summarized (ii. and iii.). Because a black/white contrast between the views of both thinkers is difficult to ascertain, in (iv:) a number of common gray areas related to the ascent will be discussed. Following this are: (v:) the general similarities; (vi:) the major differences and in (vii:), a synthesis which will confront the question: what were Plotinus' and Augustine's claims as to what extent a soul could ascend to God?

248 F. van Fleteren comments: '*Through Christ, the search of the ancient philosophers (LZ: according to Augustine) is fulfilled. Christ is the means of salvation: the only means of reaching God: The One, the Good, the Beautiful. But Christ as second Person of the Trinity is equivalent to the Neo-Platonist "fatherland". He is therefore both means and end.*' "Ascent of the Soul", *AttA*, 63-67; 63.

5.ii. Plotinus: the Epistemological Ascent and the Ascent by Love²⁴⁹

Recalling Plotinus' account of the ascent by (self-) knowledge and as well Plotinus' process of imaging in Chapter III.4.iii. and v., Plotinus' depiction of the ascent was as follows: material things were considered images of Ideas; they were perceived by the physical senses and as such became internalized or retained in the memory as mental images. They were utilized by the mind for producing imaginative mental images or producing knowledge (for example in *Enn.* IV.4.). The soul was propelled to inward reflection by the love or desire of physical objects of beauty as well as by its desire to know (*Enn.* V.8; VI.7). The rational soul dealt with the internal material images of the exterior world, especially the lower mode of thought, which was discursive. It produced knowledge and self-knowledge from these images (V.1; V.3). This knowledge was useful; however, for discovering deeper truth, these images were deemed mere sources of opinion, as they pertained to the changeable, transient nature of the exterior world. In the consciousness a level higher, the mind contemplated the eternal Ideas which were unchangeable and stable. In the light of the eternal Ideas situated in the *Nous*, the rational soul and in particular the intellect, judged the internalized images from the exterior world. This glimpse of the intelligible world was a result of actualizing the intellect, which grasped truth in a momentary, immediate intuition.

Plotinus stated that while in contemplation of the intelligible world, one was possessed by a god (*Enn.* V.8.11), the divine Intellect, the demiurge. In turning to the *Nous*, one encountered the true self. The soul became a truer image of the Intellect, imitating its relationship to the One. This brings us to the ascent to the One by love, but first a few comments on the ascent in the framework of self-knowledge from Chapter III.4.ii.b.

Plotinus' epistemological ascent was realized by philosophic reasoning starting from sense perception, rising to discursive reasoning and intellectual contemplation.²⁵⁰ The consciousness of

249 Literature on the ascent of both Plotinus and Augustine usually deals with Augustine's accounts in *Conf.* However, the focus in this section is *De Ideis*, *Gen. litt* and esp. *Trin.* I have not been able to locate literature specifically dealing with the influence of Plotinus' accounts of the ascent on those of Augustine's in *Gen. litt* and *Trin.* The subject is generally integrated into the subject matter of the intellect, the image of God, which have already been mentioned here or in the corresponding chapters in the sections on the ascent. Examples: J. Brachtendorf, *Struktur*; R. Holte, *Béatitude et Sagesse, Saint Augustin et le problème de la fin de l'homme dans la philosophie ancienne*, (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1962) (e.g.: IV. La spéculation téléologique de Plotin). In studies dealing with Augustine's account of the ascent, Plotinus is usually dealt with superficially or simply mentioned in the context of the issue which Platonist books had Augustine read from *Conf.* VII.9.13 (as discussed in Chapter II.1.ii).

For Augustine and the ascent of soul in *Gen. litt.*, see also Chapter IV.4, note 111 and 122.

For literature on Augustine and the ascent in *Trin.*, see Chapter V.4. note 213. For *Trin.* those authors will be utilized in this section here: F. van Fleteren, "The Ascent to God", *AttA*, 63-67; *ibid* "Mysticism in the *Confessiones*, A Controversy Revisited" in: F. van Fleteren, J. C. Schnaubelt, J. Reino (eds.) *Collectanea Augustiniana Augustine: Mystic and Mystagogue*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1994) 309-336; J. Cavadini, "The Structure and Intention of Augustine's *De Trinitate*", *Augustinian Studies* 23 (1992) 103-123; L. Ayres, "The Discipline of Self-Knowledge in Augustine's Book X-De Trinitate" in: Ayres (ed.), *Passionate Intellect*, 261-296; *ibid*, "The Christological Context of Augustine's *De Trinitate* XIII: Toward Relocating Books VIII-XV.", in: T. Finan, V. Twomey (eds.) *Studies in Patristic Theology* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1998), 95-121; *ibid*, *Augustine and the Trinity*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2010); *ibid* "Augustine on the triune life of God", *CCA* 2014, 60-80.

250 'But since we have come to be here below again and in soul, we seek for some kind of persuasion, as if we wanted to **contemplate the archetype in the image**. Perhaps, then, we ought to teach our soul how Intellect contemplates itself, and to teach that part of the soul which is in some way intellectual, since we call it **discursively intelligent** and by this naming indicate that it is a kind of intellect or that it has its power through and from Intellect. This therefore should know that in its own case too it comes to know what it sees and knows what it speaks. And if it was what it speaks, then it would in this way **know itself**. But since the things which it speaks are from above, or come to it from above, whence it also comes itself, it could happen to it, (LZ: it could obtain self-knowledge) since it is a rational principle (LZ: logos) and receives things akin to it and fits them akin to itself, in this way to know (*ginôskein*) itself. Let it then **transpose the image to the true Intellect**, the one [we observed] which was the same as the truths it thought which are really existent and primary,...' (*Enn.* V.3.6.14-30).

the human soul rose to the world of the Forms which were identical to the Thought of the *Nous*. The *Nous* thought itself eternally, as pure universal Thought in which discursive thinking or material images were not present. The kind of knowledge acquired here differed from that of discursive thought or opinion: it was universal truth.²⁵¹ The human intellect possessed the inherent potential to imitate the *Nous*. In its self-contemplation, the subject was equal to the object. As such, the *Nous* was characterized by absolute Self-Referencing and Self-Knowledge, perfect unity and immediate grasp of itself as Intellect in union with its objects in the intelligible world. It formed in itself a unity although its intelligible world consisted of multiplicity.

The Intellect was also characterized by its love for its source and its longing to unite with it. Thus Plotinus' concept of *Eros* (Chapter III.4.v) involved the rise of the soul to the One through the *Nous*. The force of *Eros* was needed for pulling the consciousness from discursive reasoning to the Intellect. There one experienced the love and beauty in the divine Intellect, that is, one discovered universal Love and Beauty within oneself and felt happily at one with it.²⁵² From the level of the Intellect, the ascent continued to the supra-transcendent One, after leaving rational or intelligible thought behind. The soul, who had been an image of the intellect (and/or Intellect), then became an image of the One. In doing so, the human soul imitated the Intellect when it came into existence as a *Logos* from the One: it turned to the One, its Father, longing to know its source. Aflame in love, it received its individual properties from the One and became an image of it. The One, in its singularity, in contrast to the *Nous*, did not contemplate itself; it was beyond Form, Being, Thought and Substance, in other words, it was totally and completely one with itself. Thus the desire to know impelled the human soul to rise to the Intellect and actualize her own intellect. Its desire for beauty and love incorporated in the Ideas impelled her to rise even higher, realizing that they were not the ultimate source. *'The individual souls, certainly, have an intelligent desire consisting in the impulse to return to itself springing from the principle from which they came into being...'* (Enn. IV.8.4.1).

Plotinus' term *Eros* connoted essentially a driving force, a longing, which bound the human image (intellect) to its origin, the Universal Intellect. The union with the Intellect incited a wild drunkenness of love. Love, according to Plotinus, was always expanding and creative; experienced in the human intellect, the soul longed for the Good as culmination of all longings and loves. As such, the soul, as actualized intellect, passed beyond the domain of the *Nous*, not only beyond all thought and Ideas, but also beyond self-consciousness. In union with the first Hypostasis, the

251 *'But as for the kinds of knowledge (epistêmê) which exist in a rational soul, those which are sense-objects -if one ought to speak of "kinds of knowledge" of these; "opinion" is really the suitable name for them -are posterior to their objects and likenesses of them; but those which are of intelligible objects, which are certainly the genuine kinds of knowledge (epistêmai), come from the Intellect to rational soul and do not think any sense-object; but in so far as they are kinds of knowledge, they are each and all of the active objects which they think, and they have from them within them the object of thought and the thought, because Intellect is within, which is the actual primary realities, and always keep company with itself and exists in actuality and does not seek to apprehend its objects as if it did not have them or was trying to obtain them, or was going through them discursively as if they were not ready at hand before any discursive process -these are the experiences of the soul-but it stands firm in itself, being all thing together...'* (Enn. V.9.7.1-13-end).

8: *If then, the thought [of Intellect] is of what is within it, that which is within it is its immanent form and this is the Idea. What then is this? Intellect and the intelligent substance; each individual Idea is not other than Intellect, but each is Intellect. And Intellect as a whole is all the Forms, and each individual Form is an individual intellect, as the whole body of knowledge is all its theorems, but each theorem is a part of the whole, not as being spatially distinct, but as having its particular power in the whole. This Intellect therefore is in itself and since it possesses itself in peace is everlasting fullness.'* (Enn. V.9.8.1-8)

252 *'When anyone, therefore, sees this light, then truly he is also moved to the Forms and longs for the light which plays upon them and delights in it, just as with the bodies here below, our desire is not for the underlying material things but for the beauty imaged upon them. For each is what it is by itself; but it becomes desirable when the Good colours it, giving a kind of grace to them and passionate love (erôs) to the desirers. Then the soul, receiving into itself an outflow from thence, is moved and dances wildly and is all stung with longing and becomes love.'* (Enn. VI.7.22. 1-10)

soul experienced a quiet ecstasy of infinite love for the All which entailed a temporary loss of individualization.

Hence, for Plotinus, intellectual vision was always an experience which entailed an interior metamorphosis. Impelled by *Eros*, the soul was driven from the vast multiplicity of the thoughts stimulated by sense perception, to intellectual vision and ultimately to the experience of absolute love. This experience was also characterized by a vision of divine Light from above, illuminating the mind. The experience of the ascent could be prepared for by a gradual purification of physical desires. An excessive focus on the material world or one's body would result in an unvirtuous life and cause hindrances and distractions from the ultimate goal. If one did not lose sight of the reality above, the origin or Fatherland, then the soul would return to the source and ultimately become godlike which was the birthright of every human soul.

In spite of the optimism expressed in Plotinus' philosophy of the ascent to the One, certain ambiguities or doubts by the author could be detected as well. The first concerned the human soul's natural tendency to forget its origin and direct itself away from it, -to matter and physicality, which could lead to erroneous thinking and sin (Chapter III.3.v.). The troubles an individual soul could have are illustrated in this passage of the contemplation of the One. Here the author also shows how visions of the One vary according to individual capacity.

*For this reason, Zeus, (LZ: here an allegory for the Intellect), as the oldest among the gods whom he himself leads, advances first to the contemplation of this God (LZ: the One) and there follow him the other gods and spirits and souls who are capable of seeing these things. But he (LZ: the One) appears to them from some invisible place and dawning upon them from high illuminates everything and fills it with rays and dazzles those of them who are below, and they turn away unable to see him, as if he were the sun. **Some endure him and gaze upon him, but others are troubled in proportion to their distance from him. But all those who are able to see look at him and what belongs to him when they see, but each does not always gain the same vision...but one, gazing intensely, sees the source and nature of Justice, another is filled with the vision of moral integrity, not the kind which men have here below, when they do have it (for this is some sort of imitation of that other), but that glory over all, playing upon what we may call the whole extension of that world, is seen at the end²⁵³ by those who have already seen many clear visions, the gods (LZ: the Ideas) individually and everyone together, and the souls who see everything in the intelligible world and originate from everything, so as to include everything themselves from the beginning to end; (Enn. V.8.10.1-22).***

Plotinus also sometimes expressed a certain sense of failure (the term was used by Tornau, see Chapter III.4.iv.a.) in Plotinus' depiction of the *Nous* receiving the properties of the One at its inception. The incapacity was characterized by the ungratified desires to unite with the One, caused by one's self-thinking. The frustration is reflected as well in the statements on human love, being so expansive that not even the experience of the One would completely fulfill it (for example in *Enn.* III.5.7.7-26).

253 Plotinus gives the impression here that he believes in a final eschatological vision; in this passage as well: 'How is it, then, that one does not remain there? (LZ: in union with the One) *It is because one has not yet totally come out of this world. But there will be a time when the vision will be continuous, since there will no longer be any hindrance by the body.*' (*Enn.* VI.9.10.1-3). An explanation is not given here of when, how or where that will take place.

5.iii. Augustine on the Ascent ²⁵⁴

Augustine's accounts of the ascent were often characterized as Platonistic in character as we saw in in *Conf.*, (Chapter II.1.ii.c.) and accordingly in *De Ideis* and *Gen. litt* (Chapter IV.4.ii. and iii.) This meant that these depictions generally followed the exact same pattern as those of Plotinus: a step-by-step elevation instigated by desire of beauty and love perceived at the sense level, shifting one's focus from exterior, material things to one's inward thought processes. Then the soul contemplated God or the eternal Ideas while being illuminated by the *Verbum Dei* above. Thus in Augustine's works, the ascent culminated with a glimpse by the intellect-image of God of pure immaterial light, -the Light of the Creator, a momentary *visio Dei*.

Now among the things which have been created by God, the rational soul is the most excellent of all, and it is closest to God when it is pure. And in the measure that it has clung to him in love in that measure, imbued in some way and illumined by him with light, intelligible light, the soul discerns-not with physical eyes, but with its own highest part-in which lies excellence, i.e., with its intelligence-those reasons whose vision brings to it full blessedness. These reasons (rationes), as was said, may be called ideas, or forms or species, or reasons; and while it is the privilege of many to name them what they wish, it is the privilege of very few to see them in their reality. De Ideis 2 (translation Mosher)

In his exegesis of Gen. 1:26-27,²⁵⁵ Augustine described an ascent by turning to the Creator. Through the Creator's illumination, the soul contemplated the Ideas, gradually acquiring formation. This formation consisted of awareness of God and the Ideas as creation principles, how the creation was made and understanding human consciousness as an inferior image of divine reality. This contemplation also entailed contemplating oneself in light of eternal Virtues (*Gen. litt* XII.24.50, 26.54) in order to determine one's shortcomings and defects, realizing one's utter dependency on Christ as personal intermediary and savior. In his exegesis of the image of God, Augustine showed that the formation of the angelic world of pure intellect served as paradigm for the soul's future development (Chapter IV.3.ii.b.). The difference here being, that humans would receive their formation and develop intellectual vision in the course of their lives - not in one final instance, as the angels, at the time of the original creation act.

In the following quote, Augustine shows the importance of contemplating the Ideas as Virtues, simultaneously specifying the details of a complete epistemological ascent from his theory of three visions in *Gen. litt* XII. The soul passed from physical to spiritual (mental) images to intellectual vision -combined with the element love. This included an understanding or a vision of God.

Moreover, if a man has not only been carried out of the bodily senses to be among the likenesses of the bodies seen by the spirit, but is also carried out of the latter to be conveyed as it were, to the region of the intellectual or intelligible, where transparent truth is seen without any bodily likenesses, his vision is darkened by no cloud of false opinion, and there the virtues of

254 R.E. Lauder, "Augustine: Illumination, Mysticism and Person" in: van Fleteren, *Collectanea Augustiniana*, 177-195; F. van Fleteren, "Ascent of the Soul"; *ibid* "Mysticism in the *Confessiones* A Controversy Revisited", 309-336; J.P. Kenny, *The Mysticism of Saint Augustine: Rereading the Confessions* (New York: Routledge, 2005) Chapter 9: "Snatched up to Paradise"; Plotinus' depiction of the ascent is often regarded as non-religious and intellectual, criticized with the same criteria expressed in Augustine's *Conf.* [i.e.: F. Cayre, »Notes sur les *Confessions* de Saint Augustine» *L'Année Théologique* 11 (1951), 239-243, 240].

255 Treated in Chapter IV.3.ii.; *Gen. litt* III.20.30-31.

the soul are not tedious and burdensome. For then there is no restraining of lust by the effort of temperance, no bearing of adversity by fortitude, no punishing of wicked deeds by justice, no avoiding evil by prudence. **The one virtue and the whole of virtue there is to love what you see, and the supreme happiness is to possess what you love.** For there, **beatitude** is imbibed at its source, whence some few drops are sprinkled upon this life of ours, that amid the trials of this world, we may spend our days with temperance, fortitude, justice, and prudence. It is surely in pursuit of this end, where there will be secure peace and the unutterable vision of truth, that man undertakes the labor of restraining his desires, of bearing adversities, of relieving the poor, of opposing deceivers. There the brightness of the Lord is seen, **not through a symbolic or corporeal vision**, as it was seen on Mount Sinai, **nor through a spiritual vision** such as Isaiah saw and John in the Apocalypse, **but through a direct vision** and not through a dark image, (*sed per speciem, non per aenigmatem*) as far as the human mind elevated by the grace of God speaks face to face to him whom He has made worthy of this communion. And here we are speaking not of the face of the body but that of the mind. (*Gen. litt* XII.26.54) (Taylor)

A *visio intellectualis* corresponded to the capacities or the awareness of the *imago Dei*. This vision, seen while turned to God the Creator, to his illumination and the Ideas, entailed an immediate intuition of universal truth; a flash of consciousness of immaterial, divine reality; after having risen from physical vision to spiritual vision. Chapter IV.4.iii. and VI.3.ii.c. went into detail of the characteristics of this vision, as to how it entailed the engagement with the *Verbum Dei*. The will here was functioning not in a broken manner; but optimally, consciously oriented to God. In Christ's illumination, the mind judged itself as well as the soul's intramental images. The *imago Dei* was gradually perfected by the progressive acquisition of permanent knowledge of God through intellectual vision. Augustine indicated that this vision in this life could have various degrees. In the more intense variations it was accompanied by ecstasy or being carried out of the body. (In the quote above, Augustine was describing an intellectual vision which increased in intensity, resulting in a full blown *visio Dei*.) Yet it was only in the afterlife, at the time of the resurrection, that the formation of the human images of God would be completed or perfected by the Creator. At that time they would obtain a full blessed vision of God and full knowledge of God. In this state the human mind would no longer perceive reality in *aenigmatem* as in this life now.

Augustine specified in *Gen. litt* that humans were images of Christ, the Creator, the *Verbum Dei*, the second Trinitarian Person, who will re-create or reform the human image by his grace in the afterlife. Hence, Christ was also the source of our formation as well as our eternal destination. The individual soul (*ratio*) endeavored to imitate the *Verbum Dei*-the ultimate Form Principle and the origin of *rationes aeternae* (Ideas), in his perfect adhesion to God the Father (Chapter IV.2.v.). In his depiction of the epistemological ascent in *Trin.*²⁵⁶ Augustine posited two kinds of knowledge in the rational soul: *scientia* (as in discursive thinking) and contemplation of the Ideas as in intellectual vision, to obtain *sapientia* (*Trin.* XI-XIV), as illustrated below.

23. So whenever there is a word (*sermo*) about these I think it is **a word of knowledge (*scientia*)**, to be distinguished from a word of **wisdom (*sapientia*)** which is concerned with things that neither were nor will be, just are, and which because of eternity in which they are, are talked about as having been and being and going to be without any change of real tense. It is not that they were in such a way that they are not yet, but that they always had the same being and always will have

256 Treated in Chapter V.4.ii.b. and throughout VI.3.ii.

it. They do not abide fixed locally in space like bodies, but in non-bodily nature; thus as intelligible they are available to the inspection of the mind just as bodies are visible or touchable to the body's senses. And it is not only the intelligible and non-bodily ideas of sensible localized things that abide without themselves being localized, but also those of movements passing through time that stand unmeasurable in time-these too are intelligible, of course not, sensible. Few have the acuteness of mind to reach these ideas, and when someone does manage as far as possible to attain them he does not abide in them, because his very acuteness of mind gets blunted so to say and beaten back and there is only a transitory thought about a non-transitory thing. (Trin. XII.14.23)

As confirmed in section 3.iii.h. of Chapter V, the two regions of the rational soul and the two kinds of knowledge were parallel to Augustine's types of self-knowledge: *se nosse* and *se cogitare* (Trin. IX-X). These terms designated an ascent by knowledge within the human mind: the lower region dealing with the material images, the upper region pertaining to the intellect and the immaterial image of God, which was always oriented to the *Verbum Dei*-Perfect Image of God the Father. Augustine further illustrated an epistemological ascent by human *verba*, truth, obtained in the rational soul. There were (at least) two variations on the *verba*-the lower and higher: the highest would pertain only to the immaterial intellect, the *imago Trinitatis*, which was always focused on the highest truth, the *Verbum Dei*. This particular human *verbum* was, like the eternal *Verbum*, beyond human language, but not eternal or divine, corresponding to intellectual vision which was non-representational.²⁵⁷

Augustine's depiction of the ascent by love in *Trin.* (Chapter V.4.ii.c.) consisted of gazing at beautiful material vestiges which inspired love and desire, and spiritual longings, such as the desire to know something of deeper significance, beyond mere curiosity. These were awakened in order to enjoy the beauty of this object in a deeper sense (Trin. X.1.1 and 1.2).

We must go on now to remove some of the knots and polish some of the roughnesses out of our draft presentation of these matters. But first of all, remembering that absolutely no one can love a thing that is quite unknown, we must carefully examine what sort of love it is that the studious have, that is people who do not yet know but still desire to know some branch of learning. Even over matters where we do not usually talk about studiousness, love commonly results from hearing; thus the spirit is roused of talk of someone's beauty to go and see and enjoy it, since it has a general knowledge of physical beauty, having seen many examples of it, and has something inside by which to judge and approve of that it hungers for outside. When this happens love is not being aroused for something totally unknown, since the kind of thing it is, is known in this way. And when we love a good man whose face we have not seen, we love him out of a knowledge of the virtues which we know in truth itself. (Trin. X.1.1)

In this passage, Augustine essentially takes the focus from sense perception and directs the soul's attention inwardly, confronting intramental material images which the soul judges and discerns. The soul was able to contemplate what it loved most in the divine light of Christ and his Ideas (here denoted as truth and virtues), which were free from material images.

²⁵⁷ Treated in Chapter V.3.iii.c.; Trin. VIII.9.13; IX.7.12-13, 9.14, 11.16 and XV.10.17-18, 11.20, 12.22, 14.24, ch's: 15,16, 21 and 24.

Augustine posited that one could love God through his Ideas, such as Goodness and Justice (*Trin.* VIII.3.6). As the Ideas existed in the *Verbum Dei*, it followed that one's love for God and for others involved loving Christ. The experience of loving someone had to do with love for ideal qualities in the eternal Ideas (*Trin.* VIII.8.12). As such, he indicated that the adage 'God is love' involved the Holy Spirit in particular, representing divine Love in the Holy Trinity (XV.19.37). Augustine articulated that proper faith (from Scripture) in what one knows of God yet cannot yet understand, stimulated this love for the Forms (VIII.8.12). The more passionately we loved God, he stated, the more we could 'see God, in other words, through his immutable Forms of Good and Justice. Love was equated with love for the Good and Justice, because God was absolute Good and Justice.

Thus Augustine depicted human love as actualizing and realizing its greatest potential in the intellect which was always focused on God, remembering, understanding and loving God (*Trin.* X.11.17, *etc.*). Augustine also expounded that enjoying divine love enabled us to love others, as God's love naturally flowed from one human soul to the other. In the state of mind of worshipping the Holy Trinity, one experienced truth, thus one's true self.²⁵⁸ He used the biblical terms faith, hope and love to describe the ascent (VIII.9.13, *etc.*). Hope involved the anticipation of the desired blessed vision in the afterlife, the complete face to face sight of God.

Augustine demonstrated that there were two kinds of self-love: self-love based upon external images, and self-love with a more enduring character, based upon the eternal Ideas in the *Verbum* and pertaining to the image of God.²⁵⁹ He described an ascent through self-love, to the consciousness of the image of God and then in the afterlife in the following way:

*Furthermore it (LZ: the mind) would be unable to **love itself** if it were altogether ignorant of itself; by which **image of God in itself** it is so powerful that it is able to cleave to Him whose image it is. For it has been established in the order of natures, not of places, that **no one save He is above it**. Finally, when it shall cleave to Him completely, it will be one spirit, and the Apostle bears witness to this when he says "But he who cleaves to the Lord is one spirit.", by drawing near, of course, in order to partake of that nature (participationem naturae), truth and blessedness, but yet without any increase in Him of His Nature, truth and blessedness. In that nature, therefore, to which the mind will blissfully adhere, it will live unchangeably, and all that it sees, it will see as unchangeable. Then as the Divine Scriptures promises, its desire will be satisfied with good things, with unchangeable goods, with the Trinity itself, its God, whose image it is; and that nothing may ever henceforth injure it, it will be in the secret of His Face, so filled with His abundance that it will never find delight in committing sin. But now when it sees itself it does not see anything unchangeable. (*Trin.* XIV.14.20) (McKenna)*

In *Trin.* he specified that the higher part of the rational soul, the *imago Dei*, was an image of the second Trinitarian Person in his two natures: the eternal Son-Word of God and in his Incarnation. In the quote above, Augustine wrote that Christ was just above the human intellect: '*No one save He is above it*'. In both his natures, the Son served as a perfect Image of God, whom human images should imitate.²⁶⁰ Through Christ, the source of illumination and Wisdom, Augustine posited, we come to God the Father and to the contemplation of the Holy Trinity. Although Augustine gave a meticulous demonstration of how the human intellect mirrored the *Sancta Trinitas*, the balance at the end proved that the human

258 Treated in Chapter V.3.ii.d. and e. Also cf: Zwollo, "Prayer" forthcoming.

259 Treated in Chapter V.3.iv. e. and i. ('Synthesis of Augustine's Doctrine of Love'); O. O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine*, (New Haven: Yale, 1980), 90-92.

260 *Trin* IV.3.6; VII.3.5; XV.11.20-21.

trinity dissembled more than resembled the Godhead.²⁶¹ Augustine was therefore not emphatic about the idea that humans could truly unite with the Holy Trinity. This was because the Godhead was far too great and unfathomable for human minds. The faculties of reason and intellect which mankind possessed were not equipped to completely embrace it. The Holy Trinity remained a mystery. It seemed that Augustine preferred the articulation of the possibility of a union with the Holy Trinity through one's contemplation of and unification with the second Person, Christ, as intermediary, due to the intelligibility of the Forms which existed in him and his incarnate life.²⁶² This unification included receiving the gifts of love and desire from the Holy Spirit (*Trin.* XV.17.31, 18.32, etc.). Thus the contemplation of Christ encompassed reflection on his human life as well as his equality in the Godhead with the other two Persons. It was by Christ's grace that we humans were permitted a glimpse of God or the Trinity in this life, as well as in the afterlife at the resurrection.

5.iv. General Similarities

The common aspects in the accounts of the ascent by Augustine and Plotinus were: the inward turn-from the material level of the senses, to the most immaterial and divine. The image of God, as intellect, was an elevated state of consciousness, always focused on contemplating the Ideas of God. In order to intensify the intellect, one strived to distance oneself from the physical images in our world. Augustine and Plotinus both agreed that one cannot grasp or visualize God with 'material images'. The kind of things observed with sense perception, the discursive frame of mind or in the memory would entail embracing God in an illusory way. God could not be truly associated with anything material, sense-oriented, transient or immutable. Discursive thinking entailed the grasping one or several concepts at a time or successively in contrast to the immediate intuition of the divine vision. Lower reason made up self-consciousness (in this sense, the historical self or personality). Thinking, knowledge and understanding could be elevated to higher reason and immaterial intellectual contemplation. The latter entailed stepping out of discursive thinking (Augustine specified with the grace of Christ) and grasping God by contemplation of the eternal Forms. The Forms originated in the second divine Person/Hypostasis. Through intellectual vision -the immediate and intuitive apprehension of God- God became more and more intelligible for humans. Self-Referencing was a characteristic of the the first and second Person in Augustine and the second Hypostasis in Plotinus in relation to the first.²⁶³ Accordingly, this Self-Referencing was mirrored in the self-knowledge of human images of God (albeit to a much lesser degree of unity and perfection). This enabled them to understand themselves in light of their relationship to God, to the extent that was possible. The vision of experiencing God was a purer consciousness than ordinary awareness, without being dominated by time and space. The consciousness of the image of God was thus differentiated from worldly knowledge, although worldly knowledge too could lead to truth. Yet only the image-intellect was able to acquire Wisdom, in its ascent back to the source. The first contact with the ultimate source was made through the second divine Person/Hypostasis, which drew the seeker to a certain awareness of the first divine Person/Hypostasis, the ultimate Father. The ascent of the human soul to God for both thinkers was consistently vertical, even though Augustine's triune Godhead was horizontal and non-hierarchical.

261 *Trin* XV.ch's.12-15; XV.20.39.

262 e.g.: *Trin.* XIII.19.24. Treated in Chapter V.4.ii.d.: ('God's Intelligibility and Incomprehensibility').

263 In Augustine, the characteristic of Self-Referencing applied by default to the whole Holy Trinity. *Trin.* XV *Trin.* XV.14.23, 21.40, 23.43; e.g. *Enn.* V.3.5

The ascent to God through love and intensified desire in both thinkers was actually a more effective, faster route of the ascent than accumulating knowledge. The end point was also ‘enjoying God’ or worshipping God, which culminated in a divine vision of immediate understanding, combined with intense joy. The ascent, involving an immaterial vision of the divine intelligible, could be followed by the recognition of the incomprehensible character of the magnitude of God. God was the source of all human manifestations of knowledge and love. Both thinkers treated love and knowledge in the following ascending order: physicality, immateriality, intellectual intelligibility and lastly, incomprehensibility. Augustine also depicted Christ as bringing believers to the contemplation of the Trinity and intellectual vision. This echoed Plotinus’ notion of the *Logos* which drew the soul to the contemplation of the *Nous*, in which the desire to know the One was increasingly augmented.²⁶⁴

Another particular similarity between Augustine and Plotinus to mention here, in light of God’s ultimate incomprehensibility, was the absolute conviction concerning the human mind’s ability to grasp and know God. The mind could only conceive and grasp God as far as the mind was able to grasp itself. Yet the human mind, filled with countless multifarious images, was impossible to fully fathom. Through obtaining knowledge of God, by becoming more of an image of God, self-awareness increased. Both thinkers were convinced as well that in grasping or knowing the divine, we could perceive God in some way as existing in our higher mind. This afforded some kind of indication of what God truly was: something which was ineffable and ultimately unattainable. Humans could not truly purge themselves of their inner material and worldly images or their discursive thinking as long as their soul was embodied. For both thinkers, this was a source of frustration. The soul however could experience intellectual vision, a momentary elevation above materially oriented consciousness, an encounter with God which could be accompanied by ecstasy.

The fact that both thinkers expounded that the human mind could grasp this very truth was significant. On the other hand, their position was that the human grasp of the realm of the divine was not a claim to being or becoming a god. (This statement would entail of course, neutralizing Plotinus’ claim of the intellect’s divinity to an ambitious ideal or wishful thinking.) Through this vision, the soul could not claim to an existence within the Godhead itself, at least as long as it was still living in this world. One’s actualization of the intellect increased the possible co-existence of the Godhead in the human mind, which however could never entail an equal co-habitation-due to the simple fact that an image was never equal to that what it imaged.

A further point of similarity is the way in which both Plotinus and Augustine formulated their notions of the ascent to the Godhead: it was exploratory and often entailed confirming paradoxes instead of concrete affirmations. God was experienced as ultimate Beauty and Love. The pursuit of true knowledge and true love went hand in hand. The perception of such brought about a conception of oneself beyond the historical self, the person one longed to become: the true self. P. Cary remarks that scholars often claim that Augustine’s accounts of the ascent developed from intellectual to love, implying that intellectual was cold and rational and that love involved the heart, feelings and warmth. Cary rightly concludes that this is foreign to Augustine and argues against both.²⁶⁵ This conclusion is equally applicable to Plotinus’ account of the ascent.

264 A. Pigler, “De la possibilité ou non d’un *logos* henologique» in: M. Fattal (ed.), *Logos et Langage chez Plotin et avant Plotin* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2003) 189-209; M. Fattal, “Beauté et métaphysique chez Plotin: le rôle du *logos* venu des dieux”, in: Fattal, *Logos*, 301-313.

265 *Inner Grace, Augustine in the Traditions of Plato and Paul*, (Oxford: published to Oxford Scholarship Online, May 2008) 5.

5.v. Gray Areas

5.v.a. Self-Actualization

Augustine's doctrine of grace, which entailed the soul's necessity of divine assistance to return to God, echoes throughout his major works. We saw this in particular in his doctrine of love when he wrote: '*Man has no capacity to love except from God.*' (*Trin.* XV.17.31). One of Augustine's crucial points of criticism of Platonists, as relayed in Chapter II, was the Platonists boasting of contemplating the Ideas and ascending to God as a result of their own efforts of purification.²⁶⁶ However, in *Civ. Dei* IX.17 (Chapter II.2.ii.), Augustine recognized that Porphyry and later Neo-Platonists did in fact acknowledge the necessity of divine assistance. Yet their theurgical practices of acquiring that assistance through demons were completely objectionable to him. His rebuke of relying on one's own efforts would seem to boil down to Plotinus, who did suggest in many passages that the soul was entirely responsible for its actualization.

For example, Plotinus often mentioned that the soul needed to prepare itself for the *Nous*: '*Perhaps, then, we ought to teach our soul how Intellect contemplates itself and teach that part of the soul which is in some way intellectual...*' (*Enn.* V.3.19). It could not ascend to the One without further necessary purification. For Plotinus the glimpse of the Ideas was in itself a means of purifying the soul (for example in *Enn.* V.1.10.15-18). Contemplating Virtues served as well as a means of self-purification which would lead to approaching the moral perfection of the Godhead.²⁶⁷ Below is a classic passage illustrating this in Plotinus' treatise *On Beauty* which Augustine must have doubtlessly read:

*So that the soul must be trained first of all to look at beautiful ways of life;...How then can you see the sort of beauty a good soul has? Go back into yourself and look; and if you do not yet see yourself beautiful, then, just as someone making a statue which has to be beautiful cuts away here and polishes there and makes one part smooth and clears another till he has given his statue a beautiful face, so you too must cut away excess and straighten the crooked and clear the dark and make it bright, and never stop "working on your statue", till the divine glory of virtue shines out on you, till you see "self-mastery enthroned" upon its holy seat. (*Enn.* I.6.9.3, 7-15)*

Can we assume that the exhortation to utilize one's own inner strength to return to the divine is more prominent in Plotinus than in Augustine? Typical of Plotinus, he also expressed unambiguously that it was the divine which called back its constituents back to itself (*Enn.* V.3.17.15-40, VI.7.23.1-5). Plotinus also emphasized often that the individual soul was dependent upon the *Nous* for its ascent and renewed consciousness.²⁶⁸ Hadot underscored that Plotinus did not intend the mystical union to have been achieved by one's own strength.²⁶⁹ Thus an immediate affirmation of a distinct difference here is not possible.

On the other hand, could we say that Augustine differed from Plotinus by his assertion that intellectual vision (as depicted in the experiences of divine Light in *Conf.*) and especially the contemplation of the Ideas in which a divine vision was incurred, was initiated by God? ²⁷⁰ Plotinus

266 Treated in Chapter II.1.ii.g. 'Summary...'; *Conf.* e.g.: VII.16, 17 and 20; *Trin.* IV.15.20.

267 e.g.: *Enn.* I.2.1., I.6.9., V.1.10.15-18.

268 e.g.: *Enn.* V.8.3.17, 10.23-26, 11 and 12; V.9.2.21-23, throughout VI.8 and VI.9, etc.

269 Substantiated by i.e. *Enn.* VI.7.36.17 and V.3.17.28. P. Hadot, *Plotin ou la simplicité du regard*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1993, 1997, 2010) 104-106.

270 *Conf.* VII.10.16-17.23, VII.20.26, IX.10.23-26, XI.9.11; *Gen. litt.* XII. 26.54.

did not go as far as to posit explicit personal divine intervention in the world.²⁷¹ Yet, as we saw earlier in section 3 and Chapter III.4, he did depict the attractive forces of Beauty of the One (*charis*-grace or charm) as internalized in the form of all beautiful material objects. These forces incurred the desire in the human soul to return to the source of all beauty and love. Love and Desire for the One, transmitted from the *Nous* to the Soul and human souls, were also instrumental in awakening the soul to the higher spheres (Chapter III.4.ii.a. and v.d.).

Furthermore, the *Logos*, far from being a ‘personage’, manifested as a divine force in physical beauty (for example: *Enn.* I.6.2.27-28) and in the human soul’s reasoning capacity. It pulled one’s attention back to the Godhead and the One.²⁷² Thus the divine in Plotinus was not entirely passive to the world under it and in particular to the inner reality of human souls. Moreover, Augustine would agree that conscious efforts were likewise imperative on the part of the individual to establish a relationship with God. He advocated practicing turning to God, spiritual exercises, praying, singing, reading the Bible, etc. These activities implied exercising the good will, which was originally broken by original sin but could be healed progressively by Christ. Augustine’s doctrine of grace taken to the extreme would dictate that human acts of good will or genuine acts of charity, were a gift from God, initiated by God. However it is feasible to assume that Plotinus would not have totally disapproved of Augustine’s doctrine of grace. Plotinus did highlight personal initiative. Yet even with his doctrine of grace, Augustine essentially did the same. Therefore, the point of self-actualization would constitute in my opinion more of a gray area than a major difference between Augustine and Plotinus.

5.v.b. Divinity of the Soul

The divinity of the intellect which Plotinus sometimes professed, has already been discussed several times in the course of this study. We will resume with the discussion in VI.3.iii.f and h., now in the context of the ascent. But first we will review the main points there. In section 3, the hypothesis was made that although Plotinus posited the divinity of the soul, there were so many aspects of Plotinus’ epistemology, his doctrine of intellect and imaging which Augustine had borrowed, that it all boiled down to one difference: in the eyes of Augustine, Plotinus failed to explicate the demarcation line between the individual intellect, the image, and its divine source, Intellect. Plotinus did in fact demarcate the difference between the divine and material worlds in his cosmology, and rather distinctly in his doctrine of imaging. For this reason, I did not label this point in VI.3.iii.f as a “major doctrinal. Regarding the highest part of the soul as divine would have been in Augustine’s eyes a case of superbia Plotinus did explain how egoism, self-isolation and excessive self-orientation were damaging to the soul; yet of Augustine he would have failed to sufficiently draw out the importance of humility in order to attain the beatific vision of God. This was directly due to Plotinus’ ignorance of the Incarnation of Christ. The latter was indeed a point of major discrepancy.

It was also pointed out in section 3.iii.f. on the divinity of the soul that Plotinus made his accounts of the ascent appear easy; no obstacles seem to stand in the way between the human intellect

271 Porphyry writes in *Vita Plotini* 23: ‘To Plotinus “the goal ever near was to be shown”: for his end and goal was to be united with God, who is over all things. Four times while I was with him he attained that goal, in an unspeakable actuality and not in potency only. Also it is said that the gods often set him straight when he was going on crooked course “sending down a solid shaft of light”, which means that he wrote what he wrote under their inspection and supervision.’ Armstrong comments (*Enneads*, vol. I, 71): ‘Note that Porphyry attributes his master’s achievement predominantly to divine inspiration and guidance. This had little support from the *Enneads*. Plotinus normally thinks that the philosopher can attain to the divine level without this sort of special assistance.’ Armstrong remarks correctly that there is no evidence in *Enn.* of personal ‘divine assistance’; instead the ‘assistance’ is inherent in the attractive forces of the divine when one is attuned to them, as I have demonstrated *i.e.* above.

272 Fattal, “Beauté et métaphysique”.

and the divine Intellect. However Plotinus did describe the obstacles existing in the lower soul. For instance, when she chose not to actualize her inherent potential to become one with God and assimilate the divine. Or by lending excessive attention to the body or material things. In that sense, Plotinus recognized the problem of the human will, as mentioned in that section, without necessarily expounding it so elaborately as Augustine's doctrine of *voluntas*. In contrast to Plotinus, Augustine explicitly stated that the *voluntas* was ill and required healing by Christ. Augustine also emphasized the personal relationship of the Word, Christ with humans (*Trin.* IV.2.4, etc.).

Plotinus' explicit statements on the divinity of the soul, and the misleading facility with which he relayed the ascent of the soul to the *Nous* was only one part of the whole story. His portrayal of the soul's unification with the One relayed doubts and ambiguities as well. For instance, the One did not appear to the human soul, one had to prepare for it and await its arbitrary revelation (*Enn.* VI.7.34.1-15). Plotinus even suggested that the *Nous* in its limitless longing to unite with the One resulted in unrequited gratification (Chapter III.4.iv.a. 'The Failure of the *Nous*'). The ascent to the One was even for Plotinus himself a seldom occurring event (*Vita Plotini* 23). Even if Plotinus thought the soul was divine, the ascent to the One was not as self-evident as the ascent to the Intellect. For these reasons too, I would neither regard Plotinus' claims of the divinity of the soul as major points of difference between the doctrines of the two thinkers, but as a gray area, with the same justification as above, -due to the church father's abundant borrowing of elements from Plotinus' doctrine of the soul, the immaterial intellect and the Godhead. Armstrong, as one of the few, affirms this as well.²⁷³ Augustine apparently did not consider Plotinus' doctrine of the soul such a major difference either, otherwise he would have attacked Plotinus on these points instead of extensively praising him in *Civ. Dei*. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that Augustine was nonetheless acutely aware of these discrepancies in Plotinus' doctrine of intellect, which are accounted for in Augustine's own depiction of the ascent -as in the *imago Trinitatis* to the Holy Trinity, which will be more evident in the upcoming sections.

5.vi. Major Differences

5.vi.a. Christ's Assistance in Contemplation

The personal human element in the Godhead, already deemed as one of the major differences (2.viii.a), constitutes in the context of the ascent a significant difference as well. As stated in that section, in Augustine's doctrine, Christ, not just as the eternal Son of God, but in his Incarnation, played an emphatically personal role in one's contemplation and intellectual vision. This was obviously absent in the *Enneads*.²⁷⁴ Christ was needed as Mediator up until the final vision or contemplation of God in the afterlife, when, as Augustine suggested, all our desires will be gratified.

*In that contemplation then God will be all in all (1 Cor. 15:28) because **nothing further will be desired of him**; to be illumined and rejoiced by him will be enough. ...For we shall contemplate God the Father and Son and Holy Spirit when the mediator of God and men, the man Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5) has handed over the kingdom to God the Father (1 Cor. 15:24) **and hence no longer intercedes for us as mediator and priest...** (Trin. I.10.21)*

273 "There are good reasons for not making the contrast between pagan thought and Christian thought on the divinity of the soul too unqualifying and sharp." Armstrong, "St. Augustine and Christian Platonism" in: R.A. Markus (ed.) *Augustine: A Collection of Critical Essays* (New York: Anchor, 1972), 5-37, 8-9.

274 "The fact is that 'the man Jesus Christ mediator of God and men' (1 Tim 2.5.) now reigning for all 'the just' who live by faith (Heb. 2.4.) is going to bring them to the direct sight of God to the 'face to face vision' as the Apostle calls it (1 Cor 13.1 2). That is what is meant by 'When he hands the kingdom over to God and the father' as though to say 'When he brings believers to a direct contemplation of God the Father' "(Trin. I.8.16)

Thus at the end of time Christ will endow saintly souls with their formation, which is the same knowledge which the angels possessed.²⁷⁵ He specified that Christ will transform human images of God at the resurrection to become equal to himself, because he also had a physical body in his life on earth (*Trin.* XIV.18.24). He added that humans will not be equal to him in his divine nature. Ayres specifies that for Augustine, it was not just the Son of God in his manifestation as Word of God who brought us to contemplation of God the Father and the Trinity. It was '*his incarnate materiality which draws us towards his nature as the immaterial and fully divine Son.*'²⁷⁶ This exterior aspect is impossibly Plotinian, as already mentioned, not only in the sense of the impossibility of a divine incarnation but also in that this now invisible being would aid humans in the anthropomorphic Gestalt of his Incarnation. This is especially applicable in the context of Augustine's ascent. It may be the outward character of the Son's manifestation that leads humans to him, it is nonetheless the inner contemplation of him which will transform faith to the understanding of truth and by which eternity will take possession of human mortality (*Trin.* IV.18.24).

Augustine made further use of elements of 'exteriority' in order to reach truth. Knowledge of God was also delivered through the Scriptures, which was an exterior *scientia*. Faith, -likewise considered by Augustine as *scientia*, was also necessary to bring one to *sapientia*. However in order to attain the deeper meaning of biblical texts -the *sapientia*- and in order for faith to be replaced by understanding, a transformation was required. This was brought about by the Word's assistance in his eternal nature as equal to the human Christ (*Trin.* XIII.9.12, 10.14). Additionally, in combination with the personal element present in Augustine's account of the ascent, we could include Augustine's urging to imitate the 'descent' of the *Verbum Dei* in order to ascend and return to God (*Trin.* IV.10.13). Here he was speaking predominantly of imitating the humility exhibited by the Word's Incarnation as Jesus.²⁷⁷ As stated in *Conf.* VII.9.13-14, the Platonists missed the point of the lifelong 'descent to humility', because of their ignorance of Christ. These matters of exteriority to aid in the ascent were clearly absent in Plotinus.

²⁷⁵ *Gen. litt* VI.19.30-24.41, VI.21.30.

²⁷⁶ Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2010), 147.

²⁷⁷ The ascent also involved Christ's ascension, his return to heaven and his resurrection, which humans would imitate at the death of their physical bodies.

5.vi.b. Scripture and Revelation

Recalling Augustine's criticism of the Platonists in *Trin.* IV (Chapter II.2.iv), there he mentioned no particular names of philosophers as he did in *Civ. Dei*, yet the bulk of this critique pointed directly to the practitioners of theurgy and the Platonists who had expressed their critique of Christians. This point did not apply to Plotinus, yet there was another point which undeniably did in *Trin.* IV.16.21.²⁷⁸ His critique was that their contemplation of the Ideas and true understanding of the nature of God did not afford them an overview of the history of mankind. Augustine was thinking here of the history of the world in the creation story in Genesis, the lives of Adam and Eve and the consequences of their sins for the whole of mankind.²⁷⁹ He also had in mind the glimpse into the far future provided by the letters of Paul, Revelations of John, etc.: in particular, the resurrection which humans could anticipate in the afterlife, in imitating the death and resurrection of Christ in his human Gestalt. The final blessed vision and the total contemplation of God in the afterlife were taught as well in these biblical texts.²⁸⁰ In sum, compared to the account of ascent and the highest vision of God of Plotinus, Augustine differed in that he saw the Old and New Testaments as indispensable references for the return to God. The ancient texts of Plato which Plotinus interpreted, did supply a legend concerning the beginning of time (such as the myth of Atlantis) and some eschatological information about reincarnation. The difference was that the authority of the Holy Scriptures was legitimized by sacred revelation: the revelations of the wisdom of the divine Christ (*Trin.* III.11.27, II.1.2, etc.).

Kenny asserts correctly that for Augustine, the quotidian task of meditation upon Scripture and saturating the soul in the divine Word would eradicate some effects of the fall.²⁸¹ However Kenny goes

278 '...their ability to understand the sublime and unchanging substance of God by the things that are made.....they can show very truly by the most persuasive arguments and convincing proofs that all temporal things happen according to eternal ideas...Small wonder, then, that they have not been able in any way to investigate the unfolding of the ages that stretch out ahead of us, or the turning point of the outward course which carries the human race down the river, and the return from there to the end that is due to each one. ...Nor have these philosophers contemplated such things, even though they are superior to others in their understanding of the supreme eternal Ideas.' (*Trin.* IV.16.21).

'...So we should not consult the philosophers about the future succession of the ages or the resurrection of the dead, not even those who have understood to the best of their ability the eternity of the Creator in whom we live and move and are (Acts 17:28), because knowing God by the things that that are made, they have not glorified him a God, or given thanks but calling themselves wise they have become fools (Rom. 1:20). They were not capable, of course, of fixing the keen gaze of their intellects so constantly on the eternity of that spiritual and unchanging nature that they could see in the wisdom of the creator and ruler of the universe, the rolled up scrolls of the centuries, which there already are and always are, but here only will be and so are not yet; or that they could see there the change for the better, not only of minds but also of the bodies of men, each to its own perfection. Not only were they quite incapable of seeing these things there, they were not either considered worthy of having them declared to them by holy angels, whether outwardly through the bodily senses or by interior revelations impressed on their spirits. This, though, is how these things were shown to our fathers, who were marked with true piety...,' (*ibid.* IV.17.23).

279 Augustine did not accuse Plotinus here, as M. Wisse suggests, that he had little recognition for the historicity of the self (*Participation*, 238). Augustine makes the accusation of the lack of recognition for historicity only in this passage, referring to mankind. Furthermore, there is no evidence in *Trin.* that Augustine would have criticized Plotinus on these grounds, as such an accusation would be unfounded.

280 *Gen. litt* XII; Treated in Chapter IV.4.iii.c.; Augustine's example of beatific vision: 'The one virtue and the whole of virtue there, is to love what you see and the supreme happiness is to possess what you love. An unutterable vision of truth, where beatitude is imbibed at its source...the brightness of the Lord is seen...through a direct vision.' (*Gen. litt* XII 26.54).

281 J.P. Kenny, "Faith and Reason" in: CCA, 2014, 275-291, 288: 'The restoration of reason could only be brought about through faith grounded in authority. Moreover, it could only be sustained by submitting the soul to the continuing presence of God's grace through sacred scripture. Contemplation must be a matter of sustained study of revelation in order to search out its hidden meanings for the individual soul. For the soul's interior intellection of God is, at best, momentary, leaving a memory to be recalled and refreshed by attention to Scripture.' I am not sure about what Kenny is referring to with the reformation of reason after the fall of the soul. Augustine showed that original sin deformed the image of God and the relationship with God, but I did not read in Augustine's *Gen. litt* or *Trin.* about a punishment after original sin regarding the limited use of reason. Rather, the limited power of reason to control the body was lost. See Chapter IV.3.iv.b.]

so far as to claim that Augustine replaced philosophical dialectic with scriptural reflection.²⁸² From the perspective of *Trin.*, Kenny's observation is untenable. Augustine did not dispose of philosophical dialectic or contemplation for the sake of Scripture. He integrated the two.²⁸³

5.vi.c. On Contemplating the Ideas

Augustine never spoke of a full glimpse of the entire intelligible world as Plotinus did. Perhaps he meant that a full glimpse of only certain Ideas was possible at one instance, as he demonstrated in *Trin.* VIII.3.4, in his exposition on love for the Forms Love, Good and Justice as a means of loving God. Even though Augustine did borrow Plotinus' notion of the intellectual as equal to the intelligible (section 3.ii.b.), Augustine's conception did not entail a complete union of the human intellect with the intelligible world.²⁸⁴ He did prescribe a participation with the *Verbum Dei* which was not total in this life, yet would indeed be in the afterlife. Armstrong points out that in Augustine there was also no glorification of the soul contemplating the intelligible world as it was sometimes portrayed by Plotinus.²⁸⁵ For example: *'And again, this illumination (of the Nous) gives the soul a clearer life, but a life which is not generative; on the contrary it turns the soul back upon itself and does not allow it to disperse, but makes it satisfied with the glory in itself...'* (*Enn.* V.3.8.28-30). Nor would Augustine claim that 'we are the intelligible universe' as in the following example from Plotinus: *'From these forms, from which the soul alone receives its lordship over the living being, come reasonings, opinions and acts of intuitive intelligence; and this is precisely where "we" are. That which comes before this is "ours" but "we", in our presidency over the living being are what extends from this point upwards.'* (*Enn.* I.1.7.14-15). Although we could say that Plotinus neutralized these statements in other passages, Augustine never glorified the human soul or intellect; he only glorified Christ.

Concerning self-knowledge, Augustine drew a clearer demarcation line between the human and divine mind than Plotinus. The latter seemed to sometimes posit an automatic and direct affinity of the human intellect with the divine. In Augustine there was also no suggestion of becoming divine by the experience of intellection or even a unification with the Godhead—at least in this life, as sometimes portrayed in a momentary vision in the *Enneads*.²⁸⁶ Nor did Augustine view the contemplation of God as an event which would temporarily dismember the human in its finite state.²⁸⁷ This point leads us directly to the next question: to what extent did Augustine and Plotinus specify that the intellect could unite with the Godhead?

282 *Ibid.*, 'But perhaps the most salient feature of this transition, from philosophical to theological contemplation, is the larger context in which knowledge of God is now situated.'

283 More feasible is Poque's comment that the 'dialectic in degrees' expressed in Augustine (*Sermo* 52.16-17; *Enn. Ps.* 41.7; *Io.eu.tr.* 20.11-13) (which is no different here) points to Plotinus' *Enn.* I.3.1.1-18. S. Poque, "L'expression de l'anabase plotinienne dans la prédication de St. Augustine et ses sources", *Recherches Augustiniennes* (10) 1975, 187-215. Cf. G. Madec, "Ascensio, ascensus", *AL* I, 466-475, 471.

284 Brachtendorf, *Struktur*, 48-52.

285 Armstrong ("Earthly Beauties", 72-76) remarks that Plotinus glorified the Intelligible World such as in: *Enn.* V.8.4.7-10; VI.7.12.22-30; or III.4.3.22.

286 'Our soul then is a divine thing and of a nature different [from the things of sense], like the universal nature of soul and the human soul is perfect when it has intellect; and the intellect is of two kinds, the one which reasons and the one which make it possible to reason.' (*Enn.* V.1.10-14).

287 *Struktur*, 38-39, 91; *Enn.* VI.8.7.46-54.

5.vi.d. On Unification with the Godhead

It is assumed by many researchers that in Augustine's early works, (for example in *Div. qu.* 49: *De Ideis*), he depicted a more optimistic conception of how a human could contact God.²⁸⁸ In fact, the ascent to God in *De Ideis* was relayed with great ease and without complications of the will (Chapter IV.4.ii.). Augustine's later accounts of the ascent to God in *Trin.*, like in *Conf.* VII, were often followed by an exposition on the hardships of remaining focused on God.

*Come see if you can, O "soul weighed down with the body that decays" (Wis. 9:15) and burdened with many and variable earthly thoughts, come and see it if you can-God's truth. For it is written that God is Light (1 John 1:5) not such as these eyes see, but as the mind sees when it hears. "He is truth". Do not ask what truth is; immediately a fog of bodily images and a cloud of fancies will get in your way and disturb the bright fair weather that burst on you the first instant when I said "truth". Come, hold it in that first moment in which so to speak you caught a flash from the corner of your eye when the word "truth" was spoken, stay there if you can. But you cannot, you slide back into these familiar and earthly things. And what weight is it, I ask, that drags you back but the birdlime of greed for the dirty junk you have picked up on your wayward wanderings?' (Trin. VIII.2.3)*²⁸⁹

The ascent by contemplation of the Forms, on the other hand, was usually depicted by Augustine as relatively unproblematic, as the Godhead was to some extent intelligible to the human mind, as he expounded in *Trin.* VIII.3.4. (As stressed in the previous section, this did not necessarily include a glimpse of the whole intelligible world at once.) Yet what it comes down to is this: Augustine did not posit an 'ascent to the Trinity', as authors as M. Clark suggest.²⁹⁰ Brachtendorf remarks: '*Dagegen zeigt sich in De Trinitate, dass aufgrund der besonderen ontologischen Struktur der Dreifaltigkeit der Aufstieg als Mittel der Erkenntnis unbrauchbar wird und durch Analogieüberlegungen zu ersetzen ist.*'²⁹¹ By claiming that Augustine had rendered divine Trinitarian structure as a means of a personal ascent by knowledge, useless and that he replaced it with mental exercise, Brachtendorf is shooting beyond the target. Yet this remark does contain a grain of truth. For Augustine did in fact present the special ontological structure of the Holy Trinity as well as the intelligible factors of the unity of the Godhead as useful tools for contemplation and mental exercise. Yet Augustine also mentioned in *Trin.* that we could truly unite with God (*Trin.* XIV.14.20; also XIV.14.18). However this did not involve a unification with the Holy Trinity in the sense that the three elements of the mind would be one with three divine Persons.²⁹² He did specify that if we longed to be with God, our longings will take us to God and that God's love would fulfill us.²⁹³ Enjoying and experiencing God -even if it is limited to momentary visions- will result in becoming happy in this life (*Trin.* XIII.7.10).

288 J. Brachtendorf, *Augustins Confessiones*, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005) 146-154: in his comments on the vision of Ostia, Brachtendorf argues that this vision took place actually before Augustine's 'real conversion to orthodox Catholicism', assuming as such that Augustine's story of conversion in *Conf.* VII-VIII was actually a conversion to philosophy.

289 See also *Trin.* XV.27.50, II.1.1, etc.

290 M. Clark, in her otherwise excellent summary "*De Trinitate*" CCA (2001), 91-102 writes on p. 91 and p. 98 that Augustine speaks of 'uniting with God'.

291 *Struktur*, 125.

292 *Trin.* XV.ch's.12-15, XV.20.39; Ayres points out that in *Ep.* 120, 11-12, Augustine describes three kinds of visions (as his theory in *Gen. litt* XII), but suggests that our contemplation of the Trinity is either of the third kind or simply transcends all three (Ayres, *Trinity*, 149).

293 *Trin.* XV.28.51; and as treated in section 4 on Love.

Augustine also did not admit to the possibility of becoming a perfect image of God in this life.²⁹⁴ This perfection would be attained in the afterlife when the *Verbum* re-formed or re-created the human image. Instead he emphasized contact with the second and third Persons and spoke of a vision of the Trinity by the human mind, facilitated by one's contact in terms of participation with the Light of Christ, *Verbum Dei*. The vision of the Trinity could not help but be incomplete, his argument being that something as great and all-encompassing as the divine Trinity was simply beyond reach for the human mind. The normal, rational way of human thinking (including intellectual vision) could not grasp that magnitude. Furthermore humans were unable to wholly disperse with material attachments. The latter stifled the growth process of seeing and resembling God. The material mind with its sense perception certainly could not do it; the non-representational ability of the intellect could only catch a glimpse of the Trinity in itself. The reflection of the Trinity in our own mind would not tell us everything about the divine Trinity, as the divine Trinity operated in a way much differently from ours.²⁹⁵ This did not mean that Augustine posited participation with the Holy Trinity as completely impossible, as M. Wisse concludes.²⁹⁶ Augustine did show in *Trin.* that contemplation of the divine Trinity as well as an intelligible grasp (a participation) was to some degree possible, although this did not entail a totality of any sort. Augustine encouraged trying to imagine the Trinity-to attempt to imagine what we cannot grasp. Yet he warned that this would mostly end up in illusions, phantasms because of our generally materialistic way of visualization.²⁹⁷ The difficulties here also had to do with the present life which was permeated with original sin.

Thus he urged spiritual exercises as well as the 'searching and finding' motif in *Trin.*, as piecemeal gratification to experience God (Chapter V.3.iii.g. and iv.f.). He also encouraged his readers to remain open for experiences of God as Trinity: to persist in the search for God endlessly, because our knowledge of God and experience of his Love, grew continuously. Praying to God and exposing one's heart was a form of intellectual vision. By means of purifying the human image, becoming holy, developing the intellect and acquiring a conscious resemblance of that which it images, the intellect indeed could approach union. Augustine made it clear that a complete union with God, in which one became godlike but not God, would only take place beyond this physical life.²⁹⁸ As I argued in Chapter V.(4.i. and ii.b.), the qualification of 'failure' applied to Augustine's accounts of the ascent by many scholars is inappropriate. Always longing for a lengthier and greater clarity of the vision and *not* fully attaining the intensity one desires, makes up a part of one's relationship to God. Becoming similar to God consists of a gradual process.

In Augustine's eyes, Plotinus failed to impose the necessary limits on intellectual vision of God in respect to the soul's kinship to the *Nous*. Yet Plotinus did not claim that becoming a god was the result of actualization of the intellect. His accounts of union with the *Nous* and the One were sometimes described in terms of being possessed by a god, yet they were also sometimes followed by an account of the descent, an unwilling and disappointing return to the consciousness of one's normal self (*Enn.* VI.7.34.24-end, 35.1-3). Plotinus' depictions of the ascent to the Intellect were presented as relatively unproblematic. Yet the ascent to the One was of greater difficulty. Compared to Plotinus, Augustine posited a more realistic distinction between the human image -as creature- and the Godhead as Creator. The difficulties for assimilating the divine in Augustine's thinking were

294 *Gen. litt* XII.28.32 and 36 and throughout *Trin.*

295 Treated in Chapter V.4.ii.a.; *Trin.* XV.12.22, 14.23-24, 15.25-26;

296 M. Wisse's departure point is Augustine's view on God as entailing exclusively incomprehensibility (*Participation*, 11-12).

297 Treated in Chapter V.3.iii.e.; i.e.: *Trin.* I.1.1; I.6.11, XI.1.1, etc.

298 Would the vision in the afterlife, according to Augustine, furnish perfected human images of God with complete knowledge of the second divine Person, the Creator-Christ or complete knowledge of the Holy Trinity?

not just limited to the impossibility of surpassing the natural ontological distinction between the Creator and the creature. The problem lay deeply in the bosom of mankind itself: a tragic brokenness caused by original sin which resulted in a defective relationship with the Creator. The soul could not master the body and it -as well as the world- was so permeated with carnal sin that humans could not understand God in this life any better than peering through a dark glass and enigmas (1 Cor. 13:12). Statements such as these were repeated often throughout *Trin.*, such as in XV.25.45. Theoretically, Plotinus would not have disagreed with these statements, yet Augustine would have argued that his *Enneads* did not address these issues sufficiently.

Augustine strived to formulate a more sufficient explanation in order to fill in the gaps of Plotinus' philosophy of intellect and ascent, which he otherwise found praiseworthy. He used the story of Adam and Eve in the book of Genesis to posit a general fall of mankind which served as well as a departure point for his analysis of the human will, love and desires.²⁹⁹ He showed how the human will, in its drive for love and knowledge, could go wrong in a number of different ways. The basis of this sinning for Augustine was *aversio a Dei*, turning away from God, which was a Plotinian notion as well. For Plotinus, the 'fall of the soul',³⁰⁰ which essentially involved the soul's descent from the divine world into a physical body, was also partially to blame for the human struggles in desiring the return to God.

In sum, in order to correct Plotinus, as well as to fill in the deficiencies of the great Neo-Platonist's doctrine, Augustine assured his readers that the complete experience of divine Love, the full acquisition of perfect divine knowledge and wisdom, such as the kind which was depicted in Plotinus' doctrine of intellect (in other words, perfect imaging) were impossible to attain in this life. Plotinus' optimistic depictions of intellectual vision resembled more Augustine's descriptions of the final vision in the afterlife when human image of God obtained the same knowledge of the angels. Augustine scorned those who claimed to have achieved this or to have reached perfection in this life (*Trin.* XI.5.8, XII.11.16).

An experience of God involved a momentary yet profound union with Christ, who would bring souls to contemplate the Trinity. This union included a glimpse into the second divine Person's intelligible world, assisted by Christ's own illumination, which permitted the insight of the resemblances and as well as dissemblance with God. We remained images of Christ engaged in a process of progressive development yet will only merge completely with Christ at the end of time. Through this union, humans will participate more deeply in the Holy Trinity as well.

5.vi.e. Eschatology: When and How Can We Become Godlike? Reincarnation vs. Resurrection

Plotinus' doctrine of reincarnation was given little attention in this study. Because of the stark differences between Plotinus' views on the afterlife and Christian eschatology or Augustine's interpretation of Scripture, this point deserves a brief mentioning within the discussion of the major differences.

Plotinus did not devote much space to the subject on reincarnation (*Enn.* III.4.2, IV.3.9). His theory was only mentioned in passing in this study (Chapter III.3.iii.: note 89.) in the context of *anamnese*: as remembering what one saw of the Ideas in between incarnations. Plotinus depicted becoming godlike

299 Treated in Chapter II.1.ii.c. on the will ('The Inward Turn and the Ascent (1)') from *Conf.* VII-VIII; Chapter IV.3.iv.b. ('Original Sin and the Human Will'; and (c.) ('Sin, Pride in the Context of Love and Knowledge') from the Genesis commentaries.

300 Throughout *Enn.* IV, e.g.: IV.3.4.15 ; see Chapter III.3.v. on Plotinus ('Matter, Evil, Sin and Error').

in a number of successive reincarnations, after which one earned existence in a heavenly realm.³⁰¹ He did sometimes mention judgment and punishment in Hades in the afterlife (*Enn.* I.7.3.13-14). His comments on reincarnation generally followed the account of his teacher, Plato. When one did not attain the goal and led a bad life, then future reincarnations were expected. When one behaved in a beastly manner, then reincarnation into an animal was one of the possible consequences. However he did not speculate further on matters such as what would happen when one is 'redeemed', or when one would become a divinity or other eschatological issues. He did suggest that there would be a time when intellectual vision would be more enduring. '*How is it, then, that one does not remain there?* (LZ: in union with the One) *It is because one has not yet totally come out of this world. But there will be a time when the vision will be continuous, since there will no longer be any hindrance by the body.*' (*Enn.* VI.9.10.1-3). Yet there is no explanation given of when, how or where that will take place.

Nor did he attempt to explain the consequences of his account of the unification with the One for his future life. Did these brief moments of union bring about a complete deliverance from reincarnation and from the material life? Accordingly, nowhere did he indicate that the human intellect, after becoming an image or trace of the One, would become a god or that one's being would dissolve indefinitely into the divine Being. Thus Plotinus' writings left many eschatological questions open.³⁰²

Of further interest here is Augustine's vision of the end of time, which has already been mentioned many times in the evaluations in this chapter, because it was a determining factor in his account of the ascent to God. It encompassed as well implicit critique of Plotinus' depiction of intellectual vision. It had to do with the complete divine vision which could take place at no other time but at the resurrection in the afterlife.³⁰³ His statements on the afterlife and resurrection were inspired by passages from Paul. Original sin also provided Augustine with an explanation for why the divine vision was not possible in this lifetime. One of Kenny's remarks on the differences between Augustine and Plotinus should be brought to attention here, concerning the greater impact of the fall of the soul in Augustine's thought compared to that of Plotinus:

*...that Fall could not be subsumed in the eternal pattern of procession and return that made up the metaphysical seasons of reality in Plotinus. No, The Fall was for Augustine singular and temporal and wholly disastrous. And it was irremediable on its own terms. Thus knowledge of God was not within the soul's grasp, for the resources of its own ethical renewal were never within its own control.*³⁰⁴

Kenny's representation of Augustine's attitude concerning the fall of mankind and original sin as *wholly disastrous* and *irremediable*, is contradictory and misleading. Both Augustine's and Plotinus' depiction of the fall of mankind served as an explanation for the sometimes tragic reality in which we live, in the tradition of ancient etiological myths. The story of Adam and Eve in Genesis falls as

301 Heaven *ouranos* is described in *Enn.* V.1.2 and more extensively in V.8.3.28-end-4. *Ouranos* is the intelligible world, inhabited by gods.

302 Augustine brought up the question of reincarnation yet he never explicitly condoned it. For example, in *Civ. Dei* X.30, Augustine evaluated the Platonist notion of reincarnation, commending Porphyry for not positing what to him was a ridiculous idea, that a human, no matter how evil, could reincarnate into the body of an animal. His interest in reincarnation seemed to be cut short on the basis that he could not locate any scriptural passages to substantiate it.

303 Treated in Chapter IV.3.iv.d.; *Gen. litt* XII.28.56; Treated in Chapter V.4.iii.a.; throughout *Trin.*, e.g. XIV.18.24.

304 Kenny, "Faith Reason", 288.

well within this tradition. Augustine used this story in Genesis to articulate his own doctrine of sin and used it as well to underpin his view as to why the will was not able to remain in intellectual vision for more than an instant. In Augustine's mind, the fall was not *wholly disastrous*; it was indeed irremediable in the long run, yet as this study has proved, Augustine did not depict the ascent to God as a 'failure'. Rather he posited it as a foreseeable trajectory of long-term personal (and collective) evolution and spiritual renewal. Moreover, he claimed that not only Adam's sin, which effectuated the loss of the image of God, but all sins of humanity, as having been foreseen by God. Hence, the fall of the two primeval humans was in Augustine's consideration something known to God before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:14) and essentially not contrary to God's absolute will.³⁰⁵ Likewise he affirmed that it was God's will for humans to be saved by the grace of God (*Gen. litt.* IX.18.33).

There was certainly nothing said about resurrection in Plotinus' philosophy. Yet the resurrection was for Augustine of prime importance, as it was the event when human images arrive at the final destiny: when they would receive their complete formation and become perfect images of God from Christ.³⁰⁶ It also served to demonstrate the important link between humans and Christ. In imitation of Christ's exemplary earthly life, the faithful could anticipate returning to the Father after the death of their physical bodies and at the end of time, they would follow Christ's resurrection. In conclusion, we can assert on this point that in Augustine's implicit critique of Plotinus' philosophy, the main difference here was the result of Augustine anchoring his doctrine in Scripture.

5.vi.f. *Collective Vision and Redemption*

Augustine and Plotinus both linked redemption to gathering knowledge and progressive understanding: becoming conscious of oneself while becoming conscious of the divine. Directing one's love and desires to God, overcoming the difficulties of the will to do so, was the only way to achieve this goal. For both thinkers, redemption was carried out on an individual basis: the individual turned to the inner self, contemplated and experienced illumination, vision and formation. Plotinus tended to depict an individual's ascent to the One as an alone endeavor, possessed by a god.³⁰⁷ Brachtendorf remarks: '*Schliesslich wird Augustin ebenso wie Plotin auf der Autarkie des Selbstbezugs bestehen.*'³⁰⁸ This statement, that both thinkers insisted on the importance of attaining autarky, is only partially true because Augustine broke out of exclusive individualization by urging collective redemption. Rist's poignant observations augment this conclusion.

*True union with God is not, as Augustine seems still to have thought when hoping for a platonizing "ecstasy" in Milan, a matter of the alone to the alone, a one-on-One-experience. A very different kind of "mystical union" will be seen as a high point in the cultivation of love if "the whole Christian life is a holy desire" (On John's Epistle 4.6) is properly understood. Augustine in effect repudiated his Milanese fumbings in his account of the later "ecstasy" at Ostia, where not only did he experience **a vision in company with another person, his mother Monica, but its background was the communion of saints**, of those, that is, made beautiful-and hence holy by God's grace.'*³⁰⁹

305 *Gen. litt.* X.15.24; XI.4.6, 6.8; VI.17.28-28.39.

306 Paul states that at the resurrection humans will be returned their physical bodies (1 Cor.15: 51-52). Augustine attempts to reconcile this by adding that these bodies will necessarily be of a spiritual or intransient character (*e.g. Trin.* XIV.17.23). This, too, leaves many questions open which he does not further speculate on.

307 *e.g.: Enn.* I.6.7.10. An exceptional passage is *Enn.* V.8.10.1-22, in which Plotinus describes a communal experience of the Ideas with the gods.

308 *Struktur*, 54.

309 Rist, *Augustine Deformed*, 77-78.

Rist's point here is that, Augustine, as opposed to Plotinus, described his experience of intellectual vision in Ostia with another person and most interestingly, with someone who was unschooled, his mother Monica. Augustine also wrote that the soul of a Christian pertains to the community of saints. Whether those saints are persons or angels involved in the vision of God and in prayer, in the spirit, one is not alone.³¹⁰ Redemption in the afterlife occurred according to Augustine as well on a collective basis (*Trin.* III.4.9).

Kenny places Augustine's idea of collective redemption in the context of the philosophic schools in antiquity where the intellect was collectively trained.³¹¹ This is interesting because Plotinus ran his own school in Rome. He argues that Augustine replaced the traditional philosophic school with the activities of the church.

*Augustine's new path to contemplative knowledge was to be pursued NOT through the traditional philosophical life but rather through the study of divine revelation. ...For Augustine, inner intellection is, paradoxically, denominated in social as well as individual terms. To contemplate God through Scripture is to join with the Church, "the living soul of the faithful" (Conf. XIII.21.31) in its collective knowledge of God. As such the search of wisdom is reconceived by Augustine. And is now denominated in social terms. When faith seeks understanding, it does so **by turning away from a solely individual quest for knowledge to one that is also socially grounded-in Scripture and in the Church.** The Church is not just the institutional arbiter of Scripture; it constitutes the collective life of souls who jointly know God (Conf. XIII.34.49).*

Kenny's summary stresses the social and collective context of redemption which Augustine depicts. Although Kenny's refers to *Conf.*, Augustine also refers occasionally to collective love and salvation in an ecclesiastical context in *Trin.* as well. For example:

...though he (LZ: Christ) is the Church's Head and the Church is his body...he wants his disciples to be one in him, because they cannot be one in themselves, split as they are from each other by clashing wills and desires and the uncleanness of their sins; so they are cleansed by the Mediator that they may be one in him, not only by virtue of the same nature, whereby all of them from the ranks of mortal men are made equal to the angels, but even more by virtue of one and the same harmonious will reaching out in concert to the same ultimate happiness and fused somehow into one spirit in the furnace of charity. (Trin. IV.ch.9)

We could add to Kenny's and Rist's remarks the inclusion of Augustine's instigation of monastic life³¹² for the sake of collective contemplation and redemption (which he did not speak of in *Trin.*). These aspects constitute as well a major difference with Plotinus' accounts of the ascent to God, as there was seldom evidence of collective spiritual experiences in the *Enneads*.

5.vii. Synthesis of the Ascent

The common points between Augustine and Plotinus' accounts of the ascent which were listed in point 5.iv. 'General Similarities' were extensive. Because that section was written as concisely as

310 Augustine's depiction of the communion of angels and saints: e.g. *Trin.* IV.11.14.; Kenny, "Faith and Reason", 288.

311 Kenny, "Faith and Reason", 275-291, 288-290.

312 Augustine's treatises on monastic community: *Praeceptum, De Sancta Virginate, De opere monachorum*. Cf: e.g.: T.J. van Bavel, *Ooit een land van kloosters*, (Leuven-Heverlee: Augustijns Historisch Instituut, 1991).

possible, these points do not need to be reiterated here. As stated in the introduction, discovering similarities between the thinking of Augustine and Plotinus does not pose a challenge. The difficulty is accurately putting the finger on where the major differences lie. For that reason, for the synthesis of the section 'Ascent', only an inventory is needed of the main major points of differences (from 5.v. and vi.). These require in themselves more elaboration and thus in the following subsection, point 6 (Synthesis), all the major conclusions of this chapter (especially regarding the pinpointed differences) will be reviewed and tied together.

In Augustine's conception of intellectual vision, the soul experienced in this life various degrees of contemplation of the divine. It contrasted with Plotinus' in that intellectual vision was wholly dependent upon the Word of God himself. This latter point (involving Augustine's doctrine of grace) was not in itself deemed a major difference between the two thinkers. However the active role which Christ played in Augustine's conception of the ascent by contemplation did indeed (point 5.vi.a.). Because of the divine Word's Incarnation, humans could personally relate to his life and death. The conclusion here was, in accordance with those drawn in section 3, that compared to Plotinus' depictions of the ascent, Augustine added not only a personal, human element, but an external element (the Incarnation) to assist the individual's return to God.

A major difference between the two thinkers regarding the ascent was Augustine's unwillingness to depict the possibility of a real ascent to the Trinity by the human soul in this life. In this sense, the soul was unable to unify with the three divine Persons and to become a perfect image of the Holy Trinity (point 5.vi.b.). He found it necessary to pose distinct restrictions between the human image and the Holy Trinity, due to the general assumption that the Being of the Holy Trinity in itself was far too superior in magnitude for the human mind to fathom. Augustine did claim that we can contemplate the Trinity, and that participation was to some extent possible yet this did not entail a *total* participation. Nor did Augustine interpret contemplation as a complete participation of a divine self-relationship, which would ultimately entail a transcendence (albeit momentary) of the self, in the way Plotinus sometimes suggested (5.vi.c.).

In Augustine's doctrine, there was neither a complete union of the intellect with the intelligible world in the *Verbum*. As such, he never spoke of a full glimpse of the entire intelligible world, as Plotinus sometimes did. Likewise, for Augustine there was not a direct connection from the human intellect to the divine level of existence to the extent that the intellect was always immediately and fully immersed in the divine, as often expressed in Plotinus' doctrine of the intellect. He refuted the Platonist claim that divine knowledge could be obtained solely by the contemplation of the Ideas (5.vi.b.). The Ideas did not relay God's plan for the world, the history of mankind from its inceptions to its finality (*Trin.* IV.16.21). Without the knowledge contained in the Scriptures, which for Augustine likewise relayed the knowledge of the dependency of the intellect's personal development on Christ, he evaluated Plotinian contemplation in the following way: although Plotinus' view on intellection contained an enormous amount of truth, it failed to provide the complete picture which would effectuate the goals expressed in the *Enneads* themselves. These were: the attainment of liberation from this world, becoming godlike and earning the merit of dwelling in heaven in the afterlife.

In contrast to Plotinus, Augustine envisioned a collective redemption in a number of ways (5.vi.f.), in particular in an ecclesiastical context: collectively desiring wisdom, experiencing union with God through intellectual vision, spiritual exercises and prayer, and the final beatific vision at the resurrection. In contrast to Plotinus' eschatology, which involved becoming godlike after a number of successive reincarnations, Augustine's insisted that the ultimate resemblance to God would only occur at the experience of the eschatological vision in the afterlife (5.vi.e.). For the majority of mankind such a feat was impossible in this life, he stressed, as we now can only see God through

faith, through the dark mirror and the enigmas of material images within ourselves; or in short glimpses through Christ's illumination.

6. Synthesis of the Analyses in this Chapter

6.i. Overview of Conclusions Concerning the Major Differences

The conclusions reached by comparing Augustine's and Plotinus' conceptions in the sections on this chapter on the triune Godhead, the intellect-image, love-image and the ascent in this chapter will now be considered altogether.

One of the most salient differences illustrated throughout these sections was Augustine's **Christological orientation**. Beginning with sections 2 and the 3, the comparisons of the Godhead and of the intellect-image, Augustine posited the total dependence of the human image on the second Trinitarian Person, which included a close, personal relationship on the level of the individual. The physical Incarnation of the second Trinitarian Person was involved here as Savior but also represented a central element in his Plotinian epistemology, as a source of divine knowledge and the deeper truth of mankind. Augustine's Christology was fused with another significant difference -indicated in section 2- the **personal human element** in the Godhead, an aspect which further resonated throughout all the investigated facets in this chapter.

These two aspects in turn created the necessity for Augustine to justify and underscore the necessity of Scriptures, which not only relayed the story of Christ and his resurrection, but were the sources of articles of faith and of crucial importance for coming to an understanding of God. Thus in order to understand Christ, he asserted the necessity of placing faith in the Old and New Testament. Knowledge of God, delivered through the Scriptures, was an external *scientia*, which stimulated faith (also a form of *scientia*) which served to bring one to understanding *sapientia*, the highest *Verbum*. It was Christ, together with the Holy Spirit, who lifted human insight from worldly knowledge to divine wisdom. The human Incarnation, Scriptures and faith represented external features which were intended to be interiorized, as aids to the ascent. **External features** of any kind used to reach this goal were non-existent in the *Enneads*.

This point relates back to Augustine's critique of the Platonist claim of contemplation of the Ideas in *Trin.* IV.16.21, because contemplating the Ideas alone did not supply knowledge of world history and particularly the history of how the human image had originally become deformed. One required knowledge of the Scriptures for a complete understanding of how the mind reflected the divine as they provided a more realistic representation of how and when an ascent to God could be accomplished.

Just as there were numerous correspondences between Augustine's and Plotinus' epistemologies, there were likewise a great number of correspondences between **Augustine's doctrine of amor** and **Plotinus' doctrine of Eros**, as seen in section 4. Augustine valued Plotinus' depiction of the creative role of divine *Eros* which served as an impulse to return the soul to its source. Love brought the soul much faster to a contact with God than the activity of thinking. Accordingly, love became actualized in intellectual vision, in immediate intuition. Plotinus even went so far as to depict the force of *Eros* as a desire to expand infinitely; even after experiencing the One, it longed to pass by the One, even though this was impossible. In Augustine's doctrine of love in *Trin.*, human love for God could and even should expand beyond itself. But it would surely never transcend as far as Plotinus surmised in his depiction of the ascent to the One. For Augustine, loving God in faith carried the Christian into the regions of human incomprehensibility which enabled one to progressively see God (4.iii.b.). Yet

this union of love would never constitute a total union with the Godhead, in contrast to Plotinus' accounts of unification with the One, by means of passing through and transcending the second and third Hypostases.

In the comparison between the doctrines of love between the two thinkers, the conclusion was drawn that Augustine stressed charitable behavior towards others, thereby expanding Plotinus' conception of *Eros* to explicitly include **human love** (4.iv.b.). Additionally, he fused human love with God's love, as if they were inseparable, thereby accentuating the personal human element even further. Augustine extended loving others to the way in which Christ loved all persons. It was debatable as to whether Plotinus intended to omit charity for others altogether from his philosophy. However, Augustine did not read about it in the *Enneads* and apparently urgently felt the need for a correction. He discovered plenty of scriptural passages which expressed this more concisely and in the immediate context of divine knowledge as well, such as Ep. John and in Paul's letters.

Another difference in Augustine's view of love was his accentuation of the association of **love with Justice** (4.iv.c.). The Idea Justice was evident in Plotinus' and Plato's philosophies as connected to the Idea Good. Yet the connection of Justice with Love was not so explicit. Augustine perceived that in order for people to indeed love one another and to make peace, the Idea Justice must play a much more prominent and indeed conscious role in human relations. Augustine declared in *Trin.* VIII that love for another was based upon loving Justice: one loved others for their goodness, honesty and trustworthiness, for their conscious sense of Justice as a godlike characteristic.

The elements faith and prayer were also discussed in the framework of love of both thinkers. Although faith and prayer were not alien to Plotinus' epistemology, they were not explicitly expressed in his exposition of love and desire as a means to elevate oneself to the divine. Augustine did indeed intertwine these two elements into his epistemology and doctrine of love in order to promote the ascent to God. Faith would eventually lead to understanding of desired ultimate truths. Prayer was an instrument of expression of loving and longing for God; desiring and loving God enhanced in effect one's faith.

Plotinus' position on the **divinity of the intellect**, as concluded in 3.iii.f., h. and 5.v.b, was not such a problem in itself for Augustine, as there were too many points in Plotinus' doctrine of intellect which Augustine appreciated and borrowed. He apparently deemed Plotinus' view on certain points as overly optimistic. The fast and easy manner in which Plotinus depicted the intellect uniting with the divine (on the condition that the intellect was actualized), was indeed a problem for Augustine to which he referred implicitly in *Conf.* VII.10.16. Although Plotinus analyzed the human mind and its behavior acutely, Augustine apparently saw the need to elaborate on Plotinus' psychology and make several improvements. Plotinus did differentiate in a similar way as Augustine between the human and the divine, yet Augustine saw the need to explicate this further and include the difficulties of focusing on God directly into the context of the ascending intellect. As a result, he made sure that his notion of intellect was completely without this ambiguity; its status as creature was differentiated clearly from its source whom it imaged.

Plotinus posited that in the ascent to the *Nous* and the infinite One, the soul became, even if it were in only in momentary flashes, godlike. Additionally, he depicted the human soul in its potential grandeur to become one with the highest principle of all existence and become an image of the One, by copying the divine Intellect. For Augustine, Plotinus left too many aspects of becoming godlike: the 'how', 'when' and 'how far' questions, unanswered. As he expressed in *Conf.* VII.20.26, the Platonists knew where the Fatherland was, but they did not know how to arrive there. In Augustine's exploration of the ways in which the soul as Trinitarian image could unite with the Holy Trinity (5.vi.d.), he ultimately declared that such a potential enterprise entailed severe limitations. He emphasized that a union with

the Trinity, as in the three elements of the human mind in union with the three divine Persons (for instance, as analogous to Plotinus' depiction of the soul's imaging of the three Hypostases) was not only unfeasible in this life, but he even seemed to suggest that a complete union with the Godhead in this way was neither likely in the afterlife. In fact, Augustine's depiction of the human's union with the Holy Trinity resembled Plotinus' attitude of the union of the One in many ways. Plotinus expressed his doubts clearer about the soul's union with the One, more than he did concerning the human intellect's union with the Divine *Nous*. The actualized soul in intellect desired this, but this wish was not necessarily granted.

Augustine stressed -more than Plotinus- the dependence on God for this actualization. Intellectual vision in this life, as well as the eschatological blessed vision would predominantly take place only through the grace of the second Trinitarian Person, the Son, the Word and Creator. Union with 'God' essentially meant a union with Christ. In this 'correction' of Plotinus, Augustine ironically turned to another facet of Plotinus' theology: the latter's view, too, was positive concerning a human's relationship with the second Hypostasis, who in turn, because of his strong relationship with first Person/Hypostasis, enabled human souls to contemplate the One (This similarity was pointed out in section 2.iii. on the Godhead). The difference in Augustine's view was that the *Verbum Dei's* Incarnation as Jesus Christ reinforced the personal relationship with the second Person to a much stronger degree, which actually had the effect of facilitating the union with the first Person, God the Father.

Considering Augustine's reproach of the Platonists in *Conf.* VII., that although they knew where God was, they did not know how to get there, it was therefore ironic, that Augustine agreed wholeheartedly with Plotinus that through acquiring divine knowledge and wisdom -through the epistemological ascent and through the shift of one's love and desires to God-, one would indeed arrive there! Another point of irony is that Augustine's characterization of the second Person in his divine eternal Gestalt was dominated by traits from Plotinus' notion of the divine Intellect (2.iv.). Additionally, as section 2 (ii., vi. and vii.) on the Godhead revealed, there were many common qualities in Augustine's and Plotinus' characterizations of the triune Godhead.

The greatest problem in Augustine's mind was, that in order to return to God, one needed to be equipped with a more profound knowledge of psychology than what Plotinus had to offer. The importance of humility needed to be clear, which was apprehended through study of the life of Christ. One needed to realize why his Incarnation was so necessary: to provide humans with a perfect model or a perfect Image of God which they could imitate in order to become like Him. Augustine would have thought that Platonists should realize that Christ's personal assistance in his role as Intermediary would strengthen many of the weaknesses of the human soul in her ascent to God, which were already indicated in some way in the *Enneads*.

Plotinus' goals were essentially the same as Augustine's: to progressively approach God by strengthening one's likeness to Him. In order to do so, a purification of the heart was necessary. Plotinus and Augustine prescribed this purification in many of the same ways: such as contemplating the Ideas, instilling goodness and virtue in the soul and training the mind's eye to perceive beyond the physical. But Augustine took the point of purification much further: one needed to consciously realize one's sins, regret them and confess them to Christ in prayer in order to be purged of them. Augustine directly attributed the purification of sin to the *Verbum Dei* himself, to his life on earth in which he sacrificed himself for the sins of the world, in accordance with the New Testament. Cherishing these aspects in faith purified the soul as well (3. iii.d.). As such, Augustine underscored the importance of self-awareness and self-critique to a greater extent than Plotinus. He connected this to a historical event which was intended to change the consciousness of the world, but which was not yet fully understood. When Scripture was properly understood, Christ's life was not just about the phenomenon of God

passing through this world as a human, -which in Greek philosophy was impossible- but about God who -out of love- came to the world to aid the return of humans to God the Father, by carrying their load and transforming their defects which created hardships. Through Christ's healing grace, a person was likely to be more successful in the ascent to God than by attempting this solely by individual effort.

Augustine supplemented the Plotinian account of the ascent based upon knowledge and love with the possibility of contemplation and redemption on a **collective** basis. One major deviation from Plotinus' notion of intellectual vision, was Augustine's appreciation for collective intellectual vision. The shared vision with Monica in Ostia in *Conf.* IX.10.23 illustrated Augustine's opinion that intellectual vision was not reserved strictly for 'intellectuals', but was also for humble folk, such as his mother, as well (5.vi.f.). Collectivity and community played a much stronger role in Augustine's doctrines. Augustine supplemented his theology with the personal development of the human intellect imaging Christ not only with collective reading of the Holy Scriptures, but also with collective worship and prayer in ecclesiastic and monastic communities (5.vi.f.). His accentuation of collective redemption enhanced the human personal element, as already mentioned above, which permeated other facets of his doctrines. These aspects were integrated into his doctrines and as a result provided more personal support for individuals in the ultimate redemption than was evident in the *Enneads*. All in all, Augustine argued the superiority of Christian worship to Plotinian philosophy, because of the awareness the New Testament afforded in advancing the human image's relationship to that what it imaged. Properly interpreted, these sacred texts revealed that human love may be fallible, but Christ's love for humans was not -as proved by His Incarnation.

Plotinus and Augustine both formulated doctrines which advocated participation in the Godhead. Augustine emphasized limitations on participation where they seemed to be lacking in the *Enneads*. He analyzed Plotinus' accounts of the ascent and placed necessary nuances there which were absent or omitted in the treatises which he had read. In my opinion, Augustine's statements on the infeasibility of a complete union with the Godhead did not imply a negation of an *unio mystica*,³¹³ or a pessimistic view of mankind's redemption -as if post-lapsarian humans inherently and consistently fail to return to their Creator because of the invincible effects of original sin. Instead his teachings expressed an optimistic theology, facilitated by one's relationship with Christ. His interpretation of the New Testament removed any illusions of perfection or deification in this life (*Trin.* XI.5.8; XII.11.16). Christ in collaboration with the Holy Spirit would bring the human soul to a unification with God -through the experience of love and desire, by means of contemplation and intellectual vision- to the degree and the extent that it was possible for the human individual to achieve this.

The latter clause is an expression used frequently by Plotinus (for example in *Enn.* V.3.8.57). This end note illustrates, as it has been illustrated time and time again in this study, that pointing to stark differences between the thinking of the two remains a difficult endeavor. An insight by Burnyeat can assist us to understand why this is so. Augustine's reading of Plotinus taught him not to be a slavish disciple but to create a Platonism of his own, while retaining important Plotinian themes which he found could be harmonized with Scripture and the Catholic tradition.³¹⁴ Indeed we have seen here that Augustine did not merely borrow passages from Plotinus, but thoroughly understood their context and implications in order to correct them. He integrated them into his own thinking in order to produce, like Plotinus himself did, a new, original philosophical vision.

313 e.g.: A. Schindler, *Wort und Analogie in Augustins Trinitätslehre*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1965), 227.

314 Burnyeat 1987 is quoted by Rist, yet no further bibliographic information is given. ["Plotinus and Christian Philosophy" in: L.P. Gerson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1996), 386-414, 406.]

CHAPTER SEVEN

AUGUSTINE'S CHRISTIAN PLATONISM

1. Introduction

This final chapter brings together all the major conclusions of this study in order to provide responses to the first and second inquiries. As such it will provide the most focused picture of Augustine's relationship to Plotinus' philosophy and of him as a Christian Platonist. In the last section of the foregoing chapter a synthesis of the results of the analysis of the doctrines of Augustine and Plotinus was given. This essentially served as a response to the first inquiry of this study: to identify which Plotinian concepts Augustine utilized in order to reinforce his doctrine of the image of God and the way in which he integrated them into his biblical reflection. This response was predominantly formulated by establishing the major differences between the two thinkers in their doctrines of the Godhead, the intellect, imaging, love and the ascent. Yet in this final chapter, the response to the first inquiry of this study will be continued in sections 2 and 3. Here all the conclusions throughout this study which dealt with Augustine's relationship to Plotinus philosophy will be reviewed. In section 2, this will be done through an evaluation of Augustine's major points of critique of Platonism from Chapter II. This will afford further insights into Augustine's appraisal of Plotinian Platonism and how he made use of Plotinus' philosophy. This synthesis will also be relevant in the last section (4), in which a response will be formulated to the second inquiry of this study, how can we characterize Augustine as a 'Christian Platonist'? In this section, the final results of this study will come forward. An unanswered question from Chapter V concerning the readership of the *Trin.* (from Chapter V.1.iv) will be re-considered here in the framework of the above conclusions. All the material in these sections will demonstrate how this study has afforded new insights in Augustinian scholarship. The last section (5, Epilogue, contains my final remarks in order to close this study.

2. Augustine's Critique of Platonism from Chapter II and a Review of Conclusions

In Chapter II we carefully examined Augustine's comments on Platonism in three of his works: *Confessions*, *The City of God* and *The Trinity*. In subsection II.2.v., these statements were subjected to an evaluation. It was concluded there that there was generally a sense of continuity between his remarks on Platonism in *Conf.* and those later in *Civ. Dei* and *Trin.*, only a few discrepancies could be detected. For the most part Augustine's assessment seemed fair and correct. Now we will re-examine these statements in light of the conclusions in Chapter VI.

The first and foremost point of critique of the Platonists in *Conf.* which applied to Plotinus (II.1.ii.a. and g.) was that Plotinian cosmology may have been founded on the correct conception of an immaterial, divine 'Son of God' yet it had no notion of his Incarnation (*Conf.* VII.9.13-14). As such, Platonists missed the profundity of Christ's message of humility. Thus, after reading Plotinus, Augustine claimed to still be unable to sufficiently explain his soul's interiority (*Conf.* VII.20.26-21.27). Considering how much Augustine had later read of Platonism to supplement his knowledge of this philosophy, -as demonstrated in his lengthy expositions on Platonism in *Civ. Dei*- the reproach that Platonism did not bring him further into the depths of his soul could only have hold true right after Augustine read the first Platonist book during his stay in Milan. Because as *Civ. Dei* showed, his knowledge of Platonist philosophy was profound. Yet his point was in *Conf.* that one required the story of Christ's Incarnation, the wisdom from his suffering and resurrection as relayed in Scripture, in order to understand oneself more deeply.

We can arrive at a more nuanced articulation of Augustine's poignant declaration that Platonism missed the wisdom of the Incarnation of Christ, by examining the established differences between

Augustine and Plotinus' conceptions of the Godhead from Chapter VI.2.(viii.a. and c.) and 4.(iv.a.). There, the conclusion was that the Plotinian Godhead essentially missed a personal, human element. This point was deemed a major difference in their doctrines. In Augustine's Trinitarian doctrine, the human, Jesus Christ, made up a part of the divine nature of the second Person in the triune Godhead. Augustine fully endorsed the need for a personal relationship between Christ and humans. In order to become a better image of God, Augustine stated that one should imitate Christ, not only the eternal Son in his perfect adherence to God the Father as the perfect Image, but also the life he led on earth in which this perfect imaging persisted. Christ served as a model for our future resurrection. The *Verbum Dei*-Christ also re-created and re-formed the human images in the afterlife. These were the missing elements in Plotinus' philosophy. His conception of the *Nous* did not play a direct salvific role; nor did it intervene in the lives of humans, or appear in human history. It manifested only in the higher consciousness of human souls but not in their personal physical histories (Chapter VI.2.viii.a.). In contrast to this, Augustine illustrated the direct love of God for his creatures, which also included guidance in a person's material existence.

We also saw in Chapter VI.3.iii.c. that Augustine's Plotinian epistemology included Christ's Incarnation as object of contemplation, alongside the contemplation of oneself and the divine Ideas. This essentially entailed consulting a source of external or physical nature. The Scriptures, too, were an external source of divine knowledge. They contained articles of faith (Chapter VI.3.iii.d.), a temporary form of divine knowledge, of things we cannot prove now but will be able to comprehend in the future. He designated Scripture and faith as *scientia*. Thus external sources of material knowledge to be utilized in the ascent to God constituted yet another significant difference with Plotinus' epistemology. Yet in the context of Augustine's epistemology, faith and the use of Scripture did not necessarily represent a major difference between the two thinkers. However, the distinction of a personal and human element in Augustine's conception of the Godhead DID, which subsequently related to another series of major differences established in the analysis of their doctrines of love. Thus we can say that not only did Augustine include the Incarnation into his Godhead of Love, he brought divine love down to a more human level than Plotinus, by establishing Christ's involvement with human souls who lessened their burdens by relinquishing their sins. Augustine also elevated human love and love for others in such a way, that it was equated with God's love. It was also pointed out in that section, that Augustine utilized the elements faith and prayer in his doctrine of love in order to strengthen one's relationship with God. These elements were virtually absent in Plotinus' doctrine of *Eros*. From this we can assume that his critique in *Conf.* VII.9.13-14 represented the starting point which he elaborated in an implicit manner in *Trin.*

Augustine's **second point of critique in *Conf.*** was that Plotinus failed to expound the full implications of the weaknesses in the soul which hindered retaining one's focus on God during an ascent (*Conf.* VII-VIII; Chapter II.1.ii.c.). The relationship between God and mankind had been tainted by the weaknesses of the human will, caused by Adam and Eve's original sin. The predicament of the will was inherited by all descendants of the two primeval humans thereafter. Contrary to this point of critique, we saw in Chapter III.3.v. that Plotinus actually had a substantial doctrine of sin which revolved around the will; in other words, around the soul's choice of turning away or turning towards God. There were a number of other weaknesses or sins which Plotinus brought up consistently, such as the soul's forgetting her origins which resulted in a possible exclusive focus on one's material life (for example in *Enn.* IV.4.1 and 2: *On the Difficulties of the Soul*). Or the audacious urge to turn away from one's source in order to attain autarky (*tolma*) (*Enn.* V.1.1). These Plotinian aspects were also conspicuous in various ways in Augustine's doctrine.

Regarding the topic of the difficulties of the soul to ascend to God expounded by both thinkers, this study arrived at a number of new perspectives.¹ It pointed out that Plotinus had also indicated many more problems in ascending to the One, which even for the divine *Nous*, were not without paradoxical complications. For example, Chapter III.4.iv.a. 'The failure of the *Nous*' illustrated Plotinus' subtle references to the "Desiring *Nous*", who remained ungratified due to its incapacity to transcend its own Thinking and Self-Referencing, unable to unite with the One and be one with the One. Therefore, Augustine's second point of critique concerning the lack of consideration of psychological weaknesses was deemed a gray area and essentially not a major difference in the teachings of the two thinkers. Plotinus did in fact take great care to explain the difficulties of the human soul.

On the other hand, the conclusion in 'Augustine's reception of Plotinus' epistemology' (Chapter VI.3.iii.g.), was that in Augustine's mind Plotinus did not take sufficient account of the sin of pride, and the necessity of Christ's grace -his intervention in individuals' lives to heal the soul and remit sins. In Augustine's view, the belief that one could ascend to God on one's own strength arose out of haughtiness. (This point will be discussed again below.) Nonetheless we could conclude that Plotinus' exhortation of the cleansing of the soul (which was essential for the ascent) did not include purification by means of self-critique, making the sincere effort to realize one's sins and then confessing them. This was of course not applicable to Plotinus' philosophy because the latter could only have been remitted by Christ (Chapter VI.3.iv.).

As such, the analysis of all these points brings us sooner or later back to Augustine's first point of his critique in *Conf.*, that in ignoring the Incarnation of the second Trinitarian person, one also missed out on the benefits of remission of sins and purification of the heart which would aid in the ascent to God. Thus in his critique of Platonists in *Conf.* VII-VIII, Augustine was not only referring to a sufficient lack of conception of the human will in its tendency to sin, for the notion could be found in the *Enneads* as well. The crux of the matter was that the Platonists failed to realize that the weaknesses of the will were impossible to correct without Christ's personal assistance. Furthermore, a personal relationship with Christ was awakened by the awareness of his human historical countenance through the New Testament. Thus for Augustine, a correct and complete Christology was indispensable for this life now as well as in order to prepare for the ultimate ascent to God in the afterlife. It thus constituted a major difference between the two thinkers.

A third point of critique in *Conf.* (and *Trin.*) was the Platonist assumption of an ascent to God and becoming godlike by one's own strength and efforts (Chapter II.1.ii.e.; *Trin.* IV.15.20). This study examined these points of critique and arrived at the following standpoints: that self-actualization was ultimately not deemed a point of major difference (Chapter VI.5.v.a.). I argued that in Augustine's doctrine as a whole, he put the faithful to work on themselves just as much as Plotinus did in order to actualize intellectual vision. Moreover, Augustine urged the faithful to labor in this life, not only in order to find peace and contentment in the present, but to prepare for the future resurrection. The aspects which constituted the major differences in this context were, once again, firstly, Augustine's insistence on the necessity of recognizing and confessing one's sins to Christ for the purification of the soul and secondly, recognizing the need for a perfect divine Mediator and his grace. Another point to include in the major differences was Augustine's use of prayer in his epistemology and his doctrine of love. He emphasized more blatantly than Plotinus the necessity of praying to God for strength, for help in understanding the divine and for keeping one desiring and searching God's love (for example in *Trin.* XV.28.51). Prayer was means of expression of the well-functioning will, voluntarily seeking contact with Christ.

1 e.g.: Chapter III.3.iv., v. and vi. and III.4.iii.; Chapter IV.3.iii. and 3.iv.

Another relevant point raised in the evaluation of Augustine's critique in Chapter II.3.iii. was **Plotinus' problematic position on the divine soul**: if Augustine was so against the Manichaean claim of the consubstantiality of the soul with the divine, then it was peculiar that he did not criticize Plotinus and Porphyry on this point, which they both professed explicitly. As a side note here, I could not find any studies whether this issue was extensively discussed. Therefore this study has unearthed a new debate issue in Augustinian-Plotinian studies. When this issue was confronted in the material on Plotinus (Chapter III.3.iv. and vi.), it was recognized that Plotinus had indeed posited that the soul and the intellect were divine. Yet in other contexts, he also seriously considered the weaknesses of the human soul, as well as the difficulties involved of stripping away all materiality from the soul in order to become an image of the divine Intellect. It was also evident that Plotinus believed that the intellect in most persons was underdeveloped. In consideration of the difficulties of the soul in her longings to return to God, the soul's actualization presented many complications.

These difficulties were accounted for in the context of Plotinus' epistemological depictions of the ascent, especially in contemplating the Ideas (Chapter III.4.iii.). Plotinus indicated that the lower rational soul, the *logos*, recognized the difference between itself and the 'undescended' true self in union with the *Nous* (for example in *Enn.* V.3.1-6). There was a clear distinction between ordinary consciousness and that of the intellect, in particular as to how each contemplated the Ideas. The *logos* grasped one Idea or several Ideas in a fragmented fashion; the *nous*, supposedly all at once. Thus between *dianoêtikon* and *noêsis*, a gap existed, which led us to assume that Plotinus' view of the actualization of the human soul as intellect (which was allegedly divine) was merely an ideal and practically unattainable. Plotinus did seem to recognize the difficulties in surpassing one's ordinary self in order to enter the intellectual divine consciousness and in doing so, duplicating the perfect Self-Referentiality of the *Nous*. If this feat of imitation were at all possible, then intellectual vision in this life would only entail a momentary glimpse in the higher spheres, a flight from normal consciousness and indeed of enormous intensity. This view was in fact no different than how Augustine described intellectual vision or the ascent (Chapter IV.4.iii.-iv.).

The problem with Plotinus' accounts of the ascent however was that they failed to readily mention these difficulties. Most of his accounts assumed an easiness in which the union with the divine Intellect and the One was attained. Of interest to mention here is that the Neo-Platonist proponents of theurgy had criticized Plotinus for his notion of the undescended intellect. (This point was discussed in detail in Chapter VI.3.iii.h.) It was for this reason that they prescribed soliciting assistance from demons and magical rituals, precisely what Augustine spilled so much ink on refuting in *Civ. Dei*.² Plotinus, on the other hand, condoned these practices and maintained his position on the activity of contemplation to bring one to God. Here the assumption was made, that Plotinus' complete lack of interest in theurgy would have been considered in Augustine's perspective favorable.³

Ironically, Augustine praised the Platonists in *Civ. Dei* VIII.6 and X.2 that they understood the distinction between the Creator and the creation. Plotinus did indeed make the distinction between the divine and the human, especially regarding human corporality, as we saw throughout Chapter III. What Plotinus failed to do in Augustine's eyes, was to clearly make the distinction between the actualized human soul, the intellect and the divine Intellect. A most significant statement was discovered (*Enn.* I.2.7.27-30) which spoke of the soul becoming like the gods, mentioning that

2 *Civ. Dei* VIII.14 and 17; IX.10 and 17; X.9, 11, 24, 29 and 32; and XIX.22-23.

3 Also discussed by J. Rist, "Plotinus and Christian Philosophy" in: L.P. Gerson (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1996), 386-414, 393.

their being was different from that of humans. These passages corresponded directly to Plotinus' depictions of the process of imaging in his cosmology, which assumed that an image is never an exact copy of that which it imaged. This differentiation would further apply to the notion that the quality of true being one possessed could not equal the Being of its source (Chapter III.3.vi.). Yet statements such as these were few and far between in the *Enneads*.

From this, we could deduce the following: although Plotinus often posited that the human soul and intellect were divine, he also seemed to neutralize these statements elsewhere. Therefore he certainly did not intend to mean that the soul or intellect could become divine in the same sense as the Hypostases were divine. (*Nb*: In contrast to Augustine, Plotinus imagined divinity as possessing different levels of hierarchy.) Plotinus meant that the human intellect, unlike other regions of the soul and unlike any other thing or being on the material level of existence, had a 'free' connection to the divine immaterial world; its actualization was dependent on the soul's disposition but also for a great part on the divine pulling the soul upwards. Evidently, the intellect required a long period of development and purification in order for a complete actualization to take place -perhaps even several lifetimes.

So what does this mean for Augustine's silent critique of Plotinus' notion of the divine soul or undescended intellect? Considering the immensity of Plotinian elements which Augustine had borrowed from Plotinus' doctrine of soul to reinforce his own doctrines of intellect, imaging and the Godhead, it would seem that the issue of the divinity of the soul need not be considered a point of major difference (Chapter VI.3.iii.f.-h). Nonetheless this point remained of utmost influence in Augustine's reception of Plotinus' epistemology (Chapter VI.3.iii.g.) Augustine had indeed reacted upon these discrepancies in Plotinus' doctrine. The very elements which Plotinus neglected to make clear and differentiate concerning the status of the soul became major aspects in Augustine's doctrines. Especially in *Trin.*, it was evident that Augustine's treatment of the *imago Trinitatis* and the corresponding epistemology filled in the gaps which Plotinus' philosophy left open concerning the status of the soul-intellect. The filling in of gaps consisted of the following in Augustine's psychology: that the origin of the soul was indeed a pure immaterial, intellectual realm, yet pertained to the created realm, not the divine (*Gen. litt.* III.20-30-31); that the intellect-image of God having a strong propensity for and orientation to the divine, was itself not divine; and that a creature could never equal its Creator in its union with Him.

The lacuna left by Plotinus concerning the soul and the intellect (Chapter VI.3.iii.g. and h.), was also filled in by Augustine in weaving together two kinds of knowledge: worldly or exterior knowledge with universal true wisdom. The main thread between the two was the emphasis on the eternal Christ as intermediary between *scientia* and *sapientia*. The importance of studying his Incarnation through Scripture came into the picture as well, which was classified as *scientia*. By intellectual vision, he implied, this *scientia* would transform to *sapientia*. Implied here as well was that one's faith in what is revealed in Scripture would eventually transform to understanding. Further, as he stressed in *Trin.* XV, the unification of the tripartite human intellect with the triune Godhead was not possible in this life; a more likely union could occur between the image of God and the second divine Person who brought the soul to a glimpse of the whole Godhead. Obtaining a perfect intellectual vision -as Plotinus often described- was for Augustine highly unlikely in this lifetime as well. This kind of vision, a full-blown *visio Dei* -which by implication would include the entire intelligible world- was only feasible in the afterlife. Moreover, it would only occur by Christ's grace and after the resurrection. To underscore the conclusion drawn here: my study has revealed that the aspects which Plotinus failed to explicate in his own doctrine, were those which Augustine repeated and emphasized continuously in *Conf.*, *Gen. litt* and *Trin.* These aspects were: the problem of the will, pride, the effects of

original sin and the distinction between God and humans. In fact, all these factors, as well as those mentioned above, led to an exposition of the human soul which encompassed a greater sense of unity and cohesion than that of Plotinus.

Augustine's final point of critique was articulated in *Trin.* IV, where he brought up again the objectionable Platonist practices of theurgy. Parallel to his appraisal of Platonism in *Civ. Dei*, his points of critique in *Trin.* IV concerning theurgy were directed not to Plotinus, but likely only to Porphyry and his successor, Iamblichus. In Augustine's eyes, these philosophers apparently took the theurgical or magical practices so far as to disgrace the Platonist tradition: they used materially oriented practices to arrive at contemplation of God.⁴ The other points of his Platonist critique in *Trin.* IV were indeed applicable to Plotinus. They entailed the misconception that contemplating the Ideas alone would somehow provide an overview of the history of mankind or a correct teleological perspective. For Augustine, only the Scriptures could provide such insights. If we further investigate the subjects he treated throughout book IV itself, the majority of these topics refer back in some way to his reproaches of the Platonists in *Conf.* VII-VIII. In a nutshell, these were: the differentiation of creatures from the Creator; the importance of regretting and confessing sins; the resurrection of the body; the Son of God as Creator-Word of God and his worldly mission as Redeemer; arrogance and pride as sin; and faith in the authority of the Scriptures.⁵ The exception here is the distinction of the Creator and creature for which he praised them in *Civ. Dei*. It is obvious already, these aspects were all missing in the *Enneads* because they were of a typically Christian nature.

Synthesis

The evaluation above of Augustine's major points of critique in *Conf.* has rendered a complex picture of how he regarded Plotinus and how he utilized his philosophy. Augustine's relationship to Plotinus' philosophy unfortunately does not become simpler. Now we will take a step backwards and review some of these results again in the hope of further articulating the first inquiry and to complete the evaluation of Augustine's appraisal of the Platonists.

First of all, regarding Augustine's points of critique related to the Platonist neglect of the Incarnation of the second divine Person, it could only be expected that Platonism would not include the human incarnation of a God or include the other elements directly involved in Augustine's Christology which he interpreted from passages in the New Testament. Such as: the incarnated Christ, the second Trinitarian Person as a personal Intermediary, Redeemer, Healer, Inner Teacher and remitter of sins who intervened in the human soul and in human history and served as an example for our resurrection in the afterlife. These aspects related to the topics mentioned above in *Trin.* IV and are typically Christian. Plotinus was obviously not a Christian, and furthermore, in his philosophy, God was strictly immaterial, unchangeable and eternal. Furthermore, he would not have encouraged the use of exterior elements, as those mentioned above, to elevate the soul to God. The source of existence, throughout all levels of reality, was reliably always within, never outside; its presence was objectified by the reasoning mind.

Other points of his critique, such as the weaknesses of the soul and the will or self-actualization were deemed in this study as negligible points of differences between the two thinkers. What was then the purpose of Augustine's critique in *Conf.* on these matters? In my view, Augustine utilized

4 *Trin.* IV.10.13, 11.14; Treated in Chapter II.2.ii. Here it was explained that Plotinus rejected such practices and approved only of intellectual contemplation for reaching the divine.

5 Included here as well is his doctrine of sacrament, which Rist and others suggest, could be seen as Augustine's suggesting this as an alternative to theurgy/demonology (Rist, "Plotinus and Christian Philosophy", 393).

the deficiencies or understatements he saw in the *Enneads*, such as the insufficient emphasis on the illnesses of the will, or the infeasibility to elevate oneself to God by one's own efforts, to promote his own doctrines. This required exaggerating some of the differences between himself and other Platonists. In my opinion, these differences enabled him to formulate a much clearer doctrine of the image of God, which not only offered a more realistic and convincing psychology, but was at the same time more personal and 'human'. One could criticize Augustine's doctrine of love that it was utterly unromantic,⁶ too 'common' or ugly⁷ or that he took no account of gender differences in the human psychology.⁸ Yet compared to Plotinus' doctrine of *Eros*, Augustine brought personal human (spiritual) love more into the foreground and even stimulated it in a number of different ways. In that sense, he improved Plotinus' famous teachings by promoting the extension of the fire of divine love directly into the sphere of human relations (Chapter VI.4.iv.a. and v.).

There are a few more conclusive statements to be made concerning the evaluation of Augustine's critique of Plotinus. In view of Augustine's massive borrowing from the *Enneads* as well in light of Augustine's 'implicit response' to Plotinus' notion of the divined soul, it is not tenable to claim that Augustine ever 'rejected' or ceased to consult Plotinus' philosophy.⁹ Moreover, *De Trinitate* cannot be designated as a polemic against Platonism as some have suggested.¹⁰ Seeing the quantity of aspects of Plotinian epistemology and metaphysics Augustine integrated into his doctrine of the Trinity and the *imago Trinitatis*, it would be paradoxical to maintain that Augustine's main intention in *Trin.* was to distance himself from Plotinus' philosophy. He DID indeed distance himself from Neo-Platonist theurgists and clearly so in *Trin.* IV and *Civ. Dei*. We also cannot neglect how many Plotinian concepts were borrowed from the *Enneads* and integrated into his epistemology further up in *Trin.* VIII-XIII. However, *Trin.* IV and his appraisal of Platonism in *Civ. Dei* do reveal something significant about Augustine's Christian Platonism, which will be discussed in section 4.

6 Hill, *Trinity*, 253, note 33.

7 Cary, *Invention*, 142: On the inwardness in Augustine's thinking: 'I am making a point of being critical of the concept because the experience worries me...The very metaphor is incoherent, what eyeball can turn to look inside itself? What lover desires to find her beloved by looking in herself? Though the thing cannot be done, the desire to do it is possible, maybe even common. And I think we would do better to desire what is outside ourselves.'

8 This was suggested to me by Prof. Rist in a conversation with him in Sept. 2012 in Rome at the Institutum Augustinianum during a symposium on Augustine ("Conflict/Dialogue? Augustine's Engagement with Cultures in *De civitate Dei*").

9 e.g.: A.M. Bowery states that Augustine's interest in Plotinian spirituality waned after his ordination in 391 ("Plotinus *The Enneads*" in AttA, 654-657). J.J. McEvoy lists the reasons Augustine did not remain with Platonist philosophy. "Neo-Platonism and Christianity: Influence, Syncretism or Discernment?" in: T. Finan, V. Twoney (eds.), *The Relationship between Neo-Platonism and Christianity*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1992), 155-170, 168; Burnaby, *Amor Dei*, 49-50.

10 Ayres, in discussion with Cavadini, writes that Augustine's need to emphasize faith in Christ in *Trin.* is relevant to his polemic against Neo-Platonists which suggests a continuation of his anti-Neo-Platonist critique in earlier works. ("Christological Context", 95-121, 117-121). J. Cavadini writes: 'And thus *de trinitate*...finds its context rather in a polemical dialogue, visible in other, more familiar parts of the Augustinian corpus, against Neo-platonic views of salvation and also against (as Augustine sees it) overly Platonizing Christian views.' ["The Structure and Intention of Augustine's *De Trinitate*", *Augustinian Studies* 23 (1992) 103-123; 110]. (LZ: What are these overly Platonizing Christian views?) Cavadini quotes from Augustine's other works to support his argument and to stress that Augustine's agenda was not the Neo-Platonist means of salvation through introspection: (Cavadini's words): '...what purifies the eye is not introspection but the works of mercy; love of neighbor is the way in which God may be seen.' *Io. eu. trakt.* 2.3-4; and (Cavadini): '...our knowledge of God, while not a matter of images or extension, is our growth in charity.' *Epistulae* 187.13.40-41; (*ibid.*, 122-123 note 56); E. Booth: 'The whole *De Trinitate* is a critique on Platonism.' in: "St. Augustine's '*notitia sui*' related to Aristotle, the early neo-Platonists and Hegel", *Augustiniana* 27, 1977, 70-132, 364-401 (taken from R. Kany, "Typen und Tendenzen der *De Trinitate*-Forschung seit F. Chr. Baur" in: J. Brachtendorf, *Gott und Sein Bild-Augustins De Trinitate im Spiegel gegenwärtiger Forschung*, (München: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2000), 13-28.

3. Summary of this Study, More Conclusions

We will now review other conclusions drawn throughout the chapters of this study which will supplement those from section 2 and Chapter VI.6., in order to refine the response to the first inquiry.

In Augustine's exposition of the *imago Dei/Trinitatis* in *Gen. litt.* and *Trin.*, we saw that Augustine attempted to solve a number of problems. These had to do with his doctrine of the image of God: what is "knowledge of God" by which the human image becomes similar to God? Can the human image of God become divine, if God is immaterial and transcendent? To what extent is a union of the human image with that which it images, possible in this life? These were likewise the major issues in the *Enneads*. By examining Augustine's attempts to answer these questions in Chapters IV. and V., we were able to uncover some of Augustine's underlying goals in his Trinitarian agenda. In *Gen. litt.*, he established a strong relation between the human image of God and the second Trinitarian Person, *through whom all things were made*. The Word of God, he posited, was the perfect Image of God. He also created man to his image. It was therefore God the Son, Christ, whom humans imitated or attempted to image in order to become godlike (Chapter IV.2.ii., 3.iii. and 3.iv.d.).

If Augustine had considered Plotinus' well systemized cosmology and his process of imaging¹¹ in light of his exegesis of the image of God as delineated in *Gen. litt.*, he would have evidently concluded that something was missing. Although Augustine utilized conceptions from Plotinus' philosophy to underpin his doctrine of intellect-image of God in that work, he did not specify there HOW the intellect could image the *Verbum Dei* or the Holy Trinity in the extensive manner which Plotinus did with the *Nous* and the *Godhead* in *Enn.* Let us briefly recapitulate: Plotinus described how the soul, in particular the rational soul, with its *logos* and *nous*, imitated the divine Soul, the third Hypostasis, and in particular its highest regions: the World Soul-*Logos* and the Soul-*Nous*. The latter participated strongly in the second Hypostasis, the Intellect and its intelligible world. The human soul would imitate the divine Soul in her ascent within herself by actualizing her intellect. In uniting with the *Nous*, the human soul would activate her imaging of the Intellect, as a reflection of the divine Soul-*Nous*. Within the process of the ascent to the causal source, the possibility to unite with the first Hypostasis, the One or the Good was prevalent. In that case, the relationship of the second Hypostasis to the first was essential to the human soul's ascent: in order to rise to the One, the soul must first fully actualize the consciousness of the second Hypostasis in order to ultimately transcend it. In this way, Plotinus demonstrated imaging of the soul throughout the triune Godhead. However in *Gen. litt.*, Augustine only explored the imaging of the second Trinitarian Person, the Son by the human soul and predominantly in his eternal countenance. The Son's perfect Imaging of the Father was only mentioned a few times in passing. He must have realized at some moment that this was incomplete.

Hence, Augustine's exposition on the image of God in *Trin.* appeared to be fueled by his ambition to compensate for what he was unable to explain in the context of his creation doctrine: how the human soul reflected the divine Trinity. (This observation has not been recognized in scholarly literature.) As such, he used Plotinus' doctrine of intellect and its various aspects involving imaging as model; such as the epistemology, language of ontology and substance, the two aspects of knowledge and love, etc. Augustine tackled the problem of the human imaging of the Holy Trinity by exploring the human mind more diligently than in his previous works (such as *Conf. X* or *Civ. Dei XI.26-28*) in attempt to express more acutely and as tangibly as possible how the intellect imaged the Holy Trinity.

11 Even though his doctrines in the *Enneads* were not written in a systematic manner.

This is evident in his in-depth analysis of the triads in the human mind in *Trin.* VIII-X. As a side note, many scholars attributed Augustine's source for the intramental triads to Marius Victorinus or Cicero. Yet this study showed that Plotinus also made use of triads in the divine Intellect and One, which could have inspired Augustine just as well (See Chapter VI.3.iii.b.). By carrying out a more profound study on the mind and the Godhead, he could provide a fuller explanation of imaging than in *Gen. litt.* in a generally comparable way as the *Enneads*. At the same time, while aware of the deficiencies in Plotinus' doctrine, Augustine took the opportunity to make the corrections of his Platonist mentor as mentioned above concerning the divinity of the soul and the ascent, etc..

The point above leads us to acknowledge other important conclusions of this study. The most useful way to portray these is by **a brief inventory of the elements in Augustine's doctrines in which the influence of Plotinus' doctrine of the divine Intellect was detected the strongest.** These were in his depiction of: the intellectual realm of the *caelum caeli*, the origin of the human soul in *Gen. litt.* I-III (Chapter IV.3.ii.b.); the relationship of the second divine Person to the first in his characterization of the *Verbum Dei*, and the Trinity as Self-Referential unity (Chapter VI.2.iii. and vi.). Other aspects of Plotinus' doctrine of the divine Intellect were applied to his doctrine of the image of God, such as his deployment of terminology *conversio* (Plotinus: *epistrophê*) and receiving one's formation; the activity of contemplation of the Ideas (*Gen. litt.* III.20.30-31; Chapter IV.3.iii.b.) and many others, such as those mentioned in VI.3.ii.: contemplation in general, intellectual vision, in particular, the characteristics of intellectual vision as an intuitive, immediate, non-representative comprehension of divine truth; the identification of the intellect with its intelligibles which Augustine applied to his theory of intellectual vision in *Gen. litt.* XII and also to his conception of self-knowledge in *Trin.* IX-X. Then there was the division of the rational soul into two regions-the *ratio inferior* and *superior* and its corresponding two types of knowledge: *scientia*, *sapientia* (*Trin.* XII-XIII)-, all of which bore the same characteristics of Plotinus' differentiation of *logos/nous* and *dianoëtikos/noësis*. All in all, Augustine's doctrine of intellect-*imago Dei/Trinitatis* echoed Plotinus' depiction of the imaging relationship of the *nous/Nous/Godhead*. Augustine also inspired by Plotinus' account of the imaging process taking place in the human mind itself: such as self-knowledge or *verbum intimum* being an image or product of the *mens* (*Trin.* VIII-X). This was similar to Plotinus' depiction of the imaging by the soul-*logos* of the intellect and its intellection (*Enn.* V.3.8.10, etc.). The results of the analysis in Chapter VI.3. revealed emphatically that Augustine regarded the greater part of Plotinus' doctrine of intellect as truth. Like Plotinus, he firmly believed that one could actualize the intellect (in spite of the hardships involved) and obtain truth of this existence, beginning with contemplating God through his Ideas. In this way, one could gradually return to God and become godlike.

Apart from Augustine's Christology, **the differences** formulated in the comparison of the image-intellect and Epistemology from Chapter VI.3.iii. mainly had to do with Augustine's stronger emphasis on faith, prayer, Scriptures and revelation, as well as related issues which were discussed in the previous section and deemed as typically Christian. Now we will turn to the conclusions in Chapter VI.4. on Love in the image of God-intellect.

We saw here how **Augustine employed a great deal of Plotinus' conception of *Eros* in his doctrine of *imago Trinitatis***, as an upward driving force which progressively moved through the regions of the soul in order to unite it with its ultimate true beloved-the Godhead. For both thinkers, the Godhead was the source of all love and knowledge. The force of love was awakened in the human soul by beauty, first through sense perception and subsequently becoming actualized in the intellect, where it expanded and carried one further than oneself and ultimately to God. Love became actualized in the consciousness of the intellect which was always oriented to God. As such, love was the driving force or stimulant in acquiring knowledge as well as divine wisdom. Proper love was explored

in terms of both rationality (in self-consciousness) and supra-rationality (beyond oneself as sole object). Additionally, for both thinkers, love and desire operated together to carry the soul into the realm of divine incomprehensibility. The element love formed the axis of Augustine's and Plotinus' anthropology and psychology.

Augustine's reading of St. Paul and especially John's Epistle played a major role in his treatment on love in *Trin.* VIII-X. Augustine used for his exegesis of Ep. John not only aspects of Plotinus' characterization of the *Eros* (from *Enn.* III.5, V.8 and especially VI.7), but also his conception of the Desiring Intellect, the triads in the Intellect and especially the triad of love in the One. (These included the terminology of *substantia*¹², which was also applied to *Eros*). Augustine also deployed Plotinus' general metaphysical framework, for instance, the distinction between the physical and immaterial divine worlds. The elements of knowledge and love in Augustine's exploration of the human mind in *Trin.* VIII-X were however more closely fused together and compacter than in the *Enneads*.

The major differences in their doctrines of love established in Chapter VI.4.iv. in a nutshell were the following: in Augustine's thought, the element faith went hand-in-hand with the love for God; the eternal Form Justice was inseparable from divine Love. Thus an understanding of Justice was essential for one's understanding of God and also for being charitable to others. The consideration of Justice was not only necessary for becoming a virtuous person, by becoming just and honest, as Plotinus stressed, but also for creating peaceful relations. Most importantly, Augustine placed love for others on the same level as love for God. Augustine seemed convinced that the commandment of loving one's neighbor had not reached Neo-Platonists ears. It was insufficiently articulated in the *Enneads*, where Plotinus depicted human love more as a metaphor and not a recommendation. Moreover, Augustine posited that in order to be able to steer one's love and desires back to loving God and avoiding sin, -which for Plotinus was likewise the ultimate goal- one's dependence on the personal relationship with Christ must be recognized. In turn, for Augustine, Christ's life was a guide to selfless and expansive love. He was a support and intermediary which all Platonists missed. Contrary to Plotinus, Augustine showed how to attain a resemblance to God and the fulfillment of the soul's desire by loving God and other humans; and he also showed that the other way around was true as well: that the whole Trinity loved and cared for its creation (*Trin.* I.10.20). Lastly, love and desire for God were channeled by prayer. By his vocation to prayer, Augustine stimulated an unrelenting search for God's love and knowledge, which would transform the direction of desire from self-gratification to God. Exercising faith, hope and love would bring well-being and happiness not only in this life but also prepare us for the reality in the afterlife in the Heavenly Jerusalem.

We can see here that the similarities and the differences in their doctrines of love are great in number. Additionally, for both thinkers love was a primary element in their philosophies. But what are we to make of this? We have a problem here: can we differentiate in Augustine's thinking the biblical influence from the philosophical—or better said, of Plotinus? Seeing the importance of this topic, we shall return to the subject of Augustine's re-working of Plotinus *Eros* in the upcoming sections of this chapter and consider these aspects together with other major conclusions, such as regarding Augustine's Christian Platonism in section 4 and especially the final conclusions in 4.iv.

Now we will review **the main points of Chapter VI.5., the final section on the ascent.** In *Trin.* Augustine showed that the intellect oriented to God would image the Trinity in the best way when it was engaged in the activities of remembering, understanding and loving God. In a general way, this echoed Plotinus' structure of the human soul imaging the entire triune Godhead in its hierarchic

12 i.e.: *Enn.* V.1, V.3, VI.8.15.1-5.

regions. Because the three divine Persons in Augustine's conception of the Godhead were equal, the three elements of the intramental triads were ideally equal as well. The point here is that Augustine marked important limitations in this analogy, that the human soul, even in its best imaging of God could never attain the perfect unity of the Holy Trinity. Augustine's Trinitarian and image of God theology revealed his conviction that the ascent to the Godhead did not happen in the same way as Plotinus' depiction. This was not only because for Augustine the three divine Persons were equal and for Plotinus, the three Hypostases were hierarchical (Chapter VI.2.viii.b.). Plotinus' version of the intellect merging with the divine was too spontaneous, automatic and self-evident, while, ironically, he also depicted elsewhere the struggles of the soul to attain an ascent to the divine. The contemplation of the Ideas by the intellect was often illustrated by Plotinus as a full view of the divine, intelligible world and a complete possession of the intellect by the *Nous*. Augustine made it his project to investigate these matters in *Trin.* much more thoroughly than he did in *Gen. litt.* Where were the limits between the human and divine *intellegentia*? How far could the union with God go?

Because Plotinus, in Augustine's view, insufficiently took account of the factor of normal fallibility which was due to inherent brokenness of mankind by original sin, Plotinus' depiction of intellectual visions could easily result in arrogance and self-deceit-the opposite of what the great Neo-Platonist intended. Augustine apparently thought, this must be made clear once and for all: if humans were to become godlike, then it is only God who can do this -by His will, which would purify and heal souls in a gradual, progressive manner- on a daily basis- and ultimately lift them up to his divine abode. In order for the will to become healed and strengthened, a person must follow God's Son: voluntary succumb to the will of God and thereby making himself humble. As such, Augustine showed that God's assistance and intervention went much further than Plotinus' claim of dependence in the relationship between the human and the divine. In the latter, the intellect was lifted upwards to the *Nous* and to the One by the force of attraction of *Eros*, beauty and grace, which derived from the highest principle, the Good.

Augustine must have pondered Plotinus' assertions of the soul's original divinity, the intellect's easy and direct connection to the divine, -eventually transcending all rationality and intelligibility in an union of love with the highest divine- and concluded: the glorious union with God in Plotinus' descriptions is beautiful- but the timing here is misplaced. This could never happen as long as the soul was embodied. The day when all longings would be fulfilled, when intellectual vision and imaging the Godhead would be complete, when becoming godlike and immortal was attained in the way which Plotinus envisioned it,¹³ could only take place on a long term basis. First, in this life, in a trajectory of development removing oneself from sin and impurities and approaching God to the extent that it is possible. Then this development will continue in the afterlife, at the time of resurrection, in eternity. Imaging of the Triune Godhead could be attempted in this life, but perfect imaging of the Trinity was not really the goal. Imaging Christ the eternal Son of God was. In this life, the goal was to work on collective redemption, the framework of which the ultimate ascent and resurrection in the Heavenly Jerusalem would take place.

13 In a rare passage, Plotinus did mention fleetingly that there will come a time when the vision will be continuous, no longer hindered by the body (*Enn.* VI.9.10.1-5).

4. Augustine's Christian Platonism

As a response to the final inquiry of this study, how Augustine can be characterized as Christian Platonist, we shall first start by reflecting upon what ways he could be characterized as a Christian and then as a Platonist.¹⁴ This response will be based solely upon the material from this study: from Chapter II: 'Augustine's Relationship to Plotinian Philosophy' from *Conf.* and *Civ. Dei* -and from Augustine's and Plotinus' doctrines of the image of God- intellect (Chapters III, IV and V). The topics to be treated here are: (i.) How can we characterize Augustine as a Christian?, (ii.) As a Platonist? (iii.), Augustine's relationship to Platonism (*Conf.* and *Civ. Dei*), and (iv.) Conclusions.

4.i. How Can We Characterize Augustine as a Christian?

Augustine was a full-fledged Christian and had been so his whole life (see Chapter II.1.). As a Manichaeon, he assumed that he was Christian but later he realized that he had been mistaken. His autobiography in *Conf.* III-V described how his faith and perspective grew. He told us there that he had been a Platonist for a short period...but not a full-fledged one, because of what he missed in their philosophy: the Incarnation of Christ in the second divine Person (*Conf.* VII-VIII). As his faith grew, he embraced such Christian principles as grace, the importance of Scripture, faith, revelation, the resurrection, the Old Testament as prophecy of the coming of God's Word. He came to believe that the New Testament formed a unity with the Old Testament, the New, a fulfillment of the Old. He believed the creation story in Genesis to be true and that the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Paradise portrayed an actual historical event which disclosed important messages for the faithful. This scenario showed how life today had become full of hardships. It also provided lessons in human nature: how the image of God became deformed; the dangers of power-seeking, egoism and improper loves and about not putting God our Father first in one's life. Augustine's brand of Christianity can be characterized by his belief in Christ as God's Word or Son who was completely equal to the Father. He believed in the Holy Trinity, Christ the Son being generated from the Father, (not being created) and as a complete equal. He also believed the Holy Spirit as an equal element in the unity of Trinity, having been originated from the divine love between the Father and the Son.

14 There is a great deal of literature on this subject. Nonetheless, I was unable to locate literature which focuses on Augustine's Christian Platonism regarding specifically his doctrines of the *imago Dei/Trinitatis*. This chapter makes use of a limited selection: McEvoy, "Neo-Platonism and Christianity", 155-170; J. Rist, "Plotinus and Christian Philosophy"; A.H. Armstrong, "St. Augustine and Christian Platonism" in: R.A. Markus (ed.) *Augustine, A Collection of Critical Essays*, (New York: Anchor, 1972), 5-37. Armstrong's reflections on the difficulties of the term 'Christian Platonism' are especially echoed here. See also A.P. Bos, *Geboeid door Plato. Het christelijk geloof bekneld door het glinsterend pantser van de Griekse filosofie*, (Kampen: Kok, 1996), 98-121.

Other publications on the subject include: A.H. Armstrong, "Self-Definition of Christianity in Relation to Later Platonism" in: *Hellenic and Christian Studies* (Hampshire, UK: Gower Variorum, 1990) 74-99; E. Booth, "Saint Augustine and the Western Tradition of Self-Knowing" in: R.J. de Simone, et al (eds) *Saint Augustine and the Augustinian Tradition*, 1-29; J.F. Callahan, "Augustine and the Greek Philosophers" in: R.P. Russell, B.A. Paparella (eds.), *The 1964 Augustine Lecture Series, Saint Augustine and the Augustinian Tradition*, (Villanova: Villanova University Press, 1967); Cary, *Augustine's Invention*, 33-44, 44-60; A. MacIntyre, *God, philosophy and universities, A Selective History of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition*, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009) 21-32; R. Nash, *The Light of the Mind: St. Augustine's Theory of Knowledge*, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1969) ch.'s 1 and 4 and p. 54; R. Romb, *Saint Augustine and the Fall of the Soul*, (Washington D.C.: Catholic University Press, 2006); J. Trouillard, "Procession Néoplatonicienne et Creation Judeo-Chretien" in: J. Bonnamour (ed.) *Neoplatonisme, Mélanges Offerts à Jean Trouillard, (Les Cahiers de Fontenay, nr. 19, Fontenay aux Roses, 1981), 1-30, 16-30*; M.A. Vannier, *Creatio, Conversio, Formatio chez Saint Augustin*, (Paradosis 31), (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1991) chapitre 1: «Augustin et le Néoplatonisme».

Further, he was a full-fledged Christian because of his belief in the fully human manifestation of the Word of God, whose life on earth gave witness to God's compassion for mankind in absolving their sins. It was this Person of the divine Godhead with whom he had formed an intimate relationship. He regarded the second divine Person as the creative power of the Trinity, where the eternal Ideas existed. As he told us in *Conf.*, Augustine experienced Christ illuminating his intellect; his Light providing insights into himself, as well as into mankind, bible verses, the world in general and in God. Augustine cherished *Christus Creator* as having created human souls personally, who, as eternal Truth and Wisdom, would renew them in this life and fully re-create them in the afterlife to perfect images of God (*Trin.* II.8.14; VII.3.4-4.5). Along the path of self-development, the eternal *Christus medicus* would heal the broken will and improper loves, by shedding light onto one's shortcomings and sins. Praying to God the Father for Augustine actually meant praying to Christ to confess one's sins, to express one's desires for renewal, eternal life and salvation (*Trin.* XV.28.51). These were aspects which were not present in Platonism with the exception of the second divine Person illumining souls with Wisdom and Truth.

4.ii. How a Platonist?

In *Civ. Dei*, Augustine criticized Platonist theurgists fiercely, yet for Plotinus he only expressed praise. The conclusion drawn in Chapter II.3.ii., was that Augustine's appreciation for certain points of Platonists' doctrine in *Civ. Dei* corresponded to the elements that he borrowed from them and deployed in his doctrine of creation and of the Holy Trinity. These included: the Platonist characterization of the divine as immaterial, eternal and immutable Being; the existence of an intelligible world in the mind of the Creator which served as creation principles as well as objects of contemplation; the human mind and its thinking processes as immaterial; the belief in divine providence, among others. We can assume that the aspects he applauded in *Civ. Dei* revealed how Augustine would have seen himself as Platonist.

In the course of Chapters III, IV and V, the points above were highlighted in the delineations of Plotinus' or Augustine's doctrines. More elements in Augustine's doctrines were discovered which could be added to the list of favorable aspects in Platonism or Plotinus from *Civ. Dei*, for which he indirectly expressed his preference by integrating them into his biblical exegesis. Those were the same which were mentioned in the previous section concerning knowledge and love in the context of the ascent. To recapitulate, those were: Plotinus' characterizations of the divine Intellect, especially his depiction of how the *Nous* came into being from the One, becoming the Desiring and Thinking Intellect. Augustine applied these characteristics to his doctrine of the *Verbum Dei*, his description of heaven -the realm of the angels as well as to his doctrine of the *imago Dei*. Plotinus' doctrine of the soul was applied to Augustine's exegesis of Gen. 1:26-27, as in the notions of *epistrophê* or *conversio*-, formation and the contemplation of the Ideas. Other aspects of Plotinus' teaching of the intellect were present in Augustine's doctrine of the image of God: such as intellectual vision, the identification of the intellect with its intelligibles, self-knowledge, two types of knowledge: *scientia* and *sapientia* which corresponded to the *ratio inferior* and *superior*, etc. (those already enumerated in VII.3). The entire subsection of 'General Similarities' in Chapter VI.5.iv provides a good, overall impression of Augustine's Plotinianism concerning the ascent, including the other common elements in their doctrines already mentioned here.

Augustine's elevation of contemplation of the divine and of the contemplative life as ideal also reflected his Platonist affinity, although his application was thoroughly Christian.¹⁵ (Augustine's strong propensity for contemplation will be elaborated in the next section.) His doctrines reflected as well Plotinus' profound interest in consciousness and its various levels, such as in sense perception, self-awareness and non-corporeal awareness of a truer reality above material existence. Augustine saw in Plotinus' philosophy the laboring of a great intellectual who was disciplined and pious, and who mirrored himself. Augustine followed Plotinus in his exploratory manner of describing God and the innermost self, as well as in his recommendation of a correct appreciation and use of beauties in nature and the material world as a part of philosophic living. Both sought ultimate truth in transcendence, opposed materialist world views and theurgy. Augustine regarded theurgy as a materialistic practice which substantiated his reproach of Porphyry as hypocritical and in that sense, a heretical Platonist. Both he and Plotinus even opposed Gnosticism (*Enn.* II.9).

Another point to add to Augustine's Platonism concerns the fact that Plotinus not only interpreted the works of Plato (albeit a selection thereof, namely of Plato's dialogues) but also made use of principles from Aristotle and the Stoics. His *Enneads* resulted in a synthesis of ancient philosophy up until his time. We can claim the same of Augustine: he created his own synthesis of Greek philosophy by borrowing profusely from Plotinus' epistemology and notion of *Eros*, alongside other philosophic notions (for example, of Stoic origin) and integrated it into his biblical exegesis of the *imago Dei*.

Do the differences between Augustine as Christian and as Plotinian philosopher indicate an opposition between Christian theology and Neo-Platonist philosophy? Before we attempt to answer this, let us proceed further with some remarks on Augustine's relationship to Plotinus' philosophy, in order to establish what kind of Platonist Augustine was. To do this, we will return to the topics treated in Chapter II.

4.iii. Augustine's Relationship to Platonism (*Conf.* and *Civ. Dei*)

In his autobiography, Augustine described the period in which he was actually a 'Platonist' (*Conf.* VII.9.13 to book VIII; Chapter II.1.). Sometime during his four year residence in Milan, came the day of the dramatic implosion of his old life, the moment which he characterized as his 'conversion'. After reading certain passages in St. Paul, everything in his life at that moment which was at loose ends, fell into place. What exactly his conversion portrayed or signified for him has been a subject of debate for many decades.¹⁶ The point here is that prior to his conversion, Augustine had been unwilling to pin a label onto himself. He wrote in *Conf.* V.14.25, that he had become a catechumen in Ambrose's church, until something else better would come along. He was definitely not a Manichaean

15 Ayres points out that Augustine's usage of the term *contemplatio* differs from other church fathers. Ambrose and Marius Victorinus both used the term to describe the act of consideration or reflection, which was not associated with contemplation of the divine, as Augustine does. Ayres: 'Augustine seems to have taken the more precise language from his non-Christian Platonist sources and he seems more thoroughly to have Christianized it in the sense that the language of intellectual vision is incorporated into the systematic account of the movement from faith to fulfillment....' [*Augustine and the Trinity*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2010) 150; note 29]. Ayres argues that for Augustine, contemplation was the Christian's goal: 'Augustine sees a direct link in *Trin.* I.8.17 between accepting that contemplation of Father, Son and Holy Spirit as the goal of Christian life and recognizing the faith which entails a discipline in our seeing and imagining of the material (and of material insinuations embedded in our language of faith), a discipline in which we learn NOT to take the material for that towards which it should draw us.' (Ayres, *Trinity*, 151).

16 An intellectual or a philosophical conversion? See i.e.: B. Dobell, *Augustine's Intellectual Conversion, The Journey from Platonism to Christianity*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2009). In my view, it had to do with his 'return home' to the Catholic church. This news subsequently caused his mother, a pious and orthodox Catholic herself, to rejoice (*Conf.* VIII.12.30). If his conversion had been a conversion to philosophy then she would not have responded in this way.

anymore, and his shame for having been a member of that sect grew as his contacts with Ambrose increased. He was also apparently not associated with any kind of official Platonist organization or institution or circle, (as he had been with the Manichaeans). At least, he made no mention of this, although scholars have speculated about a circle of Christian Platonists around Ambrose.¹⁷ There are suggestions in *Conf.* and *Civ. Dei* that he had contacted persons whom he could identify as Platonists. For example, in *Conf.* VII.9.13, he told of the conceited Platonist who had given him the Latin translations of the *libri platoniorum*. In *Civ. Dei*. VIII.10, he wrote that Platonist notions were close to Christians and for that reason “we could have discussions with them”. In *Conf.* VIII.2.3, Augustine relayed that it was Simplicianus, Ambrose’s mentor, who complimented him that the philosophical treatises he had been reading were commendable because the concepts there resembled Christian doctrines. Augustine evidently took this compliment very seriously which led him to express extensive praise of specific Platonist notions in *Conf.* and *Civ. Dei*. In *Conf.* VII-VIII, he praised them for their immaterial conception of God, the Son of God, the inward turn, which comprised of a *conversio* to God, an ascent and an experience of divine light. In their books, he claimed to have read of the same Son of God as in the prologue of John (which in itself was a compliment). While writing *Conf.* he was apparently not ashamed for his study of Platonism in the past, certainly not in the same sense as he had been ashamed of his past Manichaean affiliation.¹⁸ In Augustine’s final work at the end of his life, he wrote that he should have been more critical of Platonism in his earlier years.¹⁹ But which Platonists did he mean here?

In *Civ. Dei*, he directed his praise predominantly to Plato and Plotinus. Of interest to note here is that all the philosophers he mentioned in that work had been deceased already a long while. Plato had been dead 800 years, Plotinus a little more than a century. The other Platonists he mentioned were Apuleius, (died in 180) Porphyry (died in 305) and Iamblichus (died in 325). He did not mention any of his contemporaries (outside of Marius Victorinus-who had also already died at the writing of *Conf.* (*Conf.* VIII.2.3). The Platonist tradition naturally did not stop at Iamblichus; there were Platonists in Augustine’s lifetime, whom he did not mention, such as Plutarch of Athens (Archont of the Academy who lived from 350 to 430 and was also a theurgist) and Syrianus (Plutarch’s successor from 431 who died in 437).²⁰ Yet Augustine devoted a great deal of his attention to Porphyry, the Platonist who was the main target of his critique. According to Augustine, Porphyry was the first Platonist proponent of theurgy (*Civ. Dei* X.9; Chapter II.2.ii.). Although Porphyry had expressed his reserve about these matters, Augustine found his positive remarks on theurgy hypocritical, therefore meriting an extensive attack. Additionally, Porphyry’s treatise *Against the Christians* incited a sharp response from the church father.

However, in reality, it was Porphyry’s apprentice, Iamblichus, not Porphyry himself who was a genuine advocate of magical practices.²¹ Considering the fact that the Academicians, Syrianus and

17 A theory proposed originally by P. Courcelle, [*Recherches sur les Confessions de Saint Augustin*, (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1950, 1968) 136-138 and 251-255] which was applauded by many. I concede with McEvoy, that there is not enough evidence to posit a Platonist movement within the church of Milan. (“Neoplatonism and Christianity”, 164, 169). See also F. van Fleteren, “Ascent to God” *AttA*, 63-67, 64.

18 *Retractationes* 1.1.

19 In *Retractationes* I.3.2 he also reproached himself for having assimilated the Kingdom of God with the Platonic intelligible world in his earlier writings. See Rist, “Plotinus and Christian Philosophy”, 392.

20 The Athenian Academy continued to flourish under i.e. Proclus (a theurgist, 412-485) up until Damascius (458-after 538). Cf: J. Halfwassen, *Plotin und der Neoplatonismus*, (München: C.H. Beck, 2004) 142-161.

21 See Iamblichus’ work *On the Mysteries* I.12.42. Augustine’s remarks on Porphyry, and the list of Porphyry’s works he quotes throughout *Civ. Dei*, are delineated in detail in Chapter II, note 76.; Rist, “Plotinus and Christian Philosophy”, 393, 408.

Proclus were practioners of theurgy as well, it is plausible to conclude that Platonism in Augustine's day had come to be associated with magic or demonology. Augustine made his disgust for theurgy in *Civ. Dei* more than clear. But why did he not refute Platonists who were alive in his day, with whom he might have had contact? We could conjecture that Augustine's contact with Platonism was mainly through their literature. But before we confirm this conclusion, let us examine another aspect of ancient Platonism.

Platonism in Augustine's lifetime was not divided into Middle and Neo-Platonism as it is today. These divisions are in many ways artificial, useful for a general historical reference within the broader spectrum of the history of ideas. This means that Augustine's own view of Platonism was much different than how we regard it now. Therefore we need to withdraw these conventional distinctions and labels from our thinking when we set out to characterize Augustine as some kind of Platonist, because he obviously did not see them this way himself.²² For him, a Platonist was simply a philosopher who studied the works of Plato and revered him as mentor. He wrote in *Civ. Dei* IX.10 that Plotinus was distinguished from other Platonists in that he was regarded as the best interpreter of Plato. This distinction was already made known by famous thinkers at the publication of the *Enneads* by Porphyry, thirty years after Plotinus' death.²³ Today Neo-Platonists are generally considered as followers of Plotinus, who interpreted their master's work, the *Enneads*. Yet because Plotinus, unlike later Neo-Platonists, did not succumb to theurgy, he would in this light be considered a separate case. If Augustine had thought that Plotinus gave an exact rendition of Plato's doctrines,²⁴ then he would have regarded the later Platonist theurgists as deviants or even heretics of Plato.²⁵ The theurgist Platonists, in Augustine's mind, would stem from Porphyry and not Plotinus.²⁶ Augustine seemed to have more personal affinity with the 'conservative Platonism' of Plotinus, who trusted the contemplation of higher spheres to bring him to God. Especially considering that Augustine had few points of critique of Plato himself (*Civ. Dei* XXII.26). In Augustine's mind, Plotinus was the only Platonist who had given the most faithful interpretation of his teacher (*Civ. Dei* IX.10). In this sense Plotinus would have been for Augustine a less objectionable Platonist than Porphyry and his successors. Reading between the lines in these statements, we could conjecture that Augustine, like many thinkers in the society of his time, had a strong appreciation for what was traditional and ancient.

Yet Augustine never pinned the Platonist label onto himself. His unwillingness to be associated with the Platonists of his day could have been due to their embracing of theurgy but also possibly due to a critical attitude of Christians, following the example of their mentor, Porphyry.²⁷ As mentioned in the conclusions of Chapter II.1.ii.h., it would be fallacious to regard all Platonists as Augustine's 'opponents' in the same way Manichaeans were for him. Manichaeism was a doctrine which he deeply needed to put behind him for a number of reasons.²⁸ It would therefore be more appropriate to consider only the anti-Christian Platonists who approved of or practiced theurgy as

22 Rist, "Plotinus and Christian", 387-388.

23 Such as Longinus, whose remarks on Plotinus Porphyry mentions in *Vita Plotini* 19.40. It is this distinction which likely contributed to the demarcation between Middle and Neo-Platonists made in the 17th century, which we maintain today.

24 As he suggests in *Contra Academicos* III.18.41, by calling Plotinus *Plato revivendus*, 'Plato lived again'.

25 Rist, "Plotinus and Christian Philosophy", 393; Armstrong, "St. Augustine and Christian Platonism", 8.

26 See Chapter II, note 79. This note gives an extensive description of Plotinus' critique of matters such as magic or demonology.

27 Porphyry's *Fifteen Arguments Against the Christians* is now only preserved in fragments in works by other authors. Among them are Augustine in *Civ. Dei*. X.24, 32 and XIX.23.

28 Among these reasons was surely the Edict of 380-381, which banned from the Roman Empire those who could not endorse the creed of Nicaea, which of course, included Manichaeans.

his true opponents. At the same time, it is undeniable that Augustine employed certain articulations from Porphyry's works as well (such as on self-knowledge).²⁹ Hence Augustine apparently did not feel hindered to borrow stimulating ideas or formulations from his opponents. Platonism may have been pagan yet Augustine considered it nonetheless a step up from Manichaeism Christian Gnosticism. Throughout his major works, he maintained that Platonists were arrogant intellectuals (*Trin.* IV.15.20, etc.). They disregarded the Old and New Testament -perhaps because of its simple style and lack of erudition, as he himself did as a Manichaean in his younger years. They ignored the lessons of humility exemplified by the Incarnation of the Son of God and presumed they could rise to God on their own volition and strength, as relayed throughout *Conf.* VII-VIII and *Trin.* (for example, IV.1.1 and 15.20). Plotinus would have been included as the target of Augustine's reproaches mentioned above only by default, simply because he was not a believer of Jesus Christ or because he did not have knowledge of Judeo-Christian Scripture.

Attempting to divide Augustine's orientation to Plotinus from his biblical-Christian orientation presents a number of difficulties. Augustine was correct in claiming there were many principles in Platonism which resemble biblical verses.³⁰ The most salient similarity which Augustine himself mentioned was the 'Son of God' in Platonism which corresponded with the *Logos* of John.³¹ Yet other questions arising from these remarks have yet to be fully explained. For example, was Plotinus perhaps familiar with the Gospel of John? Or were Plotinus and John affiliated with the works of the Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria, such as *De opificio mundi* (at least indirectly)? In this work, Philo posited the *Logos* as the creative entity of the world, as containing the Ideas and serving as intermediary between God the Father and the world. *Nb:* Plotinus and Philo were both Alexandrians. The study of this phenomenon fell beyond the boundaries of this study, yet one wonders nonetheless. Augustine knew the bible inside out. Many of his favorite quotes of biblical passages were indeed not far from Platonic or Platonist notions, example: the designation of the inner man and outer man in Paul, a description also used by Plato and Plotinus.³² Thus we could also pose the question: had Paul read Middle-Platonist philosophy or Philo?

In *Civ. Dei* VIII.5-10, Augustine stated repeatedly that many of the concepts found in Platonism are those which Christians also adhered to. However, no one today would expect to find such notions as the theory of Forms or Ideas in the bible. Nonetheless, many Christian thinkers before Augustine (such as Gregory of Nyssa, Origen, Ambrose, among others) integrated similar Platonist concepts into their biblical exegesis.³³ Perhaps for this reason, it appeared acceptable for Augustine to claim, that these too were Christian principles. However, Augustine showed in *De Ideis* 1 his knowledge that the theory of Forms originally came from Plato. In any case, Augustine's integration of Plotinus' theory of Ideas into his own doctrines could entail his following a certain Christian intellectual tradition. In the case of the transmission of the theory of Ideas, Philo was a model for many early Christians, who, for example, in his *De opificio mundi*, integrated various aspects of Greek philosophy into his exegesis of the Old Testament and additionally demonstrated that the Forms could be applied to the Genesis creation story.

29 See I. Bochet and various authors in this volume explicating the Porphyrian influence in Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Dei*: «Le statut de l'image dans la pensée augustinienne» or «Présentation» in: I. Bochet (ed.), *Augustin: la question de l'image*, Archives de Philosophie, Recherche et Documentation Tome 72 (2009), Cahier 2, 195-198, 240-271.

30 See the peculiar passage in *Enn.* I.2.3-end about the *Logos* which resembles the prologue of St. John and more so Augustine's *Trin.* XV.10.19 (See Chapter IV.4.iv.b.).

31 *Conf.* VII.9.13; Chapter II.1.ii.a. and Chapter II.2.iii.h.

32 For more examples see Chapter VI.3.iii.d. on 'Faith, scripture and revelation'.

33 McEvoy, "Neo-Platonism and Christianity", 156-159; Armstrong on the divinity of the soul, "St. Augustine and Christian Platonism", 4-7.

As we have seen up until now, the task of characterizing Augustine as a Christian Platonist and his relationship to Plotinus' philosophy remains complex. Another point of complication is the influence of Ambrose on young Augustine, whose exegeses also contained many Platonisms.³⁴ Through Ambrose, Augustine came to embrace the Old Testament as God's Word and Truth (*Conf.* V.13.23, VI.3.4). He accepted that some biblical passages may not always be immediately fathomable, yet that bible study would certainly open doors to acquiring true divine knowledge, contrary to the Manichaean claim.³⁵ At the same time of his life, he read certain treatises of the *Enneads* which must have stimulated his longing for God and beauty, the longing for knowledge of God and to experience God's limitless goodness and love. Ironically, the understanding of God and self-awareness in the *Enneads* brought Augustine's search back to the bible, where he discovered these ideas in a different articulation. In that sense, the *libri platonicorum* had actually enriched his understanding of the bible, as they seemed to do for Ambrose. The combined influence of Ambrose and Plotinus inspired him to interpret the book of Genesis and devise his own view on the image of God.

4.iv. Conclusions

The characterization of Augustine's Christian Platonism and differentiating Augustine's biblical and Plotinian orientation will now be discussed in light of two important aspects: contemplation and love. Plotinus was an advocate of contemplation and the contemplative life. His philosophy sought to fathom the inner recesses of the mind and explain concretely the elevation of the soul to the Godhead through descriptions of his own experiences which attempted to make the unspeakable concrete. This description fits Augustine's depiction of contemplation in *Trin.* like a glove (Chapter VI.3.ii.a.). Plotinus had his own school in Rome, where, it could be said, contemplation was done on a collective basis (Chapter VI.5.vi.f.). Augustine introduced collective contemplation into a community and in particular, an ecclesiastical setting. This was notable in various ways. After his conversion in Milan, he rejected his plans for a prestigious career and marriage. Subsequently, he, his mother and his friends retreated to an estate in northern Italy for philosophic contemplation (*Conf.* IX.3.5). Then, upon returning to North Africa, he founded his own monastic community.³⁶ Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Dei/Trinitatis* reflects this calling to contemplative life as well, which necessarily included, at least to some extent, a certain, but not total, removal from worldly events. Yet in contrast to Plotinus, contemplative life practiced by Augustine, had a more collective character. It included not only being gathered together with members of the church in prayer but also the joint study of the Scriptures, praise of God and sharing the hope of collective redemption.

Plotinus generally depicted contemplation as a lone experience in the union with God, the Intellect or the One (for example in *Enn.* I.6.9). On the other hand, Augustine described a shared intellectual vision with Monica in *Conf.* IX.10.24. Augustine's deviation from Plotinus in this respect involved the calling to contemplation of Christ (and by Christ). Augustine wanted to make his readers aware of the practical ups and downs of this contemplation as related to the ascent to God, by explaining -more clearly than Plotinus- for instance, why the soul does not always co-operate with the wishes

34 From G. McCool's study, (see Chapter II, note 44) we can assume that Ambrose's treatises were likely one of Augustine's first exposures to Neo-Platonism. "The Ambrosian Origin of St. Augustine's Theology of the Image of God in Man", *Theological Studies*, vol. 20 (1959) 62-81. See also Rist, "Plotinus and Christian Philosophy", 402-404. Before reading the *libri platonicorum*, Augustine was already acquainted with Platonism through the works of Cicero, who translated Plato's *Timaeus*. (F. van Fleteren, "Plato, Platonism", *AttA*, 651-654, 651).

35 In e.g.: *De genesi contra manicheos* and *Gen. litt* I.21.41.

36 P. Brown, *La Vie de Saint Augustin*, (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1971) 169-170 [original title: *Augustine of Hippo, A Biography*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1967, 2000.) Translated to French by J. Marrou.

of the intellect. Similar to Plotinus, he urged the contemplation of the second divine Person of the Godhead. In *Trin.*, he explained contemplation of the *Verbum Dei* in his many intelligible facets.

This study dealt with the following aspects of Christ, as object of reflection, spiritual exercise or addressee in prayer: Christ, as Creator, through whom all things were made and who directly created the human soul; as the source of all our knowledge and wisdom; as the Re-creator and Re-former of human souls; Christ, who led a human life and therefore knew all the pains, suffering and injustice of human existence; Christ, whose love was infinite, who healed the human will and the wounds of the soul. He forgave our sins so that we may come to understand his eternal existence and know divine love. Augustine also encouraged meditating on Christ's relationship to the other Trinitarian persons, as such, the divine Trinity in its unity, which was unfathomable and inexpressible in human language. The unattainability of complete knowledge of God was supplemented by prayer, the optimistic endeavor of 'seeking and finding', his deep conviction that faith would certainly lead to understanding.

The contemplation of Christ, as depicted in *Trin.*, brought about a more effective ascent to God than Plotinus' account, for Christ personally assisted and accompanied the soul's gradual development to its completion, so that the human image of God may resemble its Maker. Augustine described Christ as pulling human souls out of the darkness of human existence by illuminating them (for example in *Conf.* VII.20.26 -as Christ did for him), in order to prepare them for the next phase of existence in heavenly Jerusalem. Christ was our guide to our future resurrection, the example of how to become immortal and godlike in the afterlife (*Trin.* IV.3.6). Contemplation of God's intelligible and incomprehensible facets was a foremost aspect of Plotinian philosophy, but for Augustine, these aspects were integrated into a Christology in which the Incarnation and the Scriptures played a major role.

The second point has to do with the aspect love and Augustine's appropriation of Plotinus' conception of *Eros*. Chapter VI.4 pointed out the major differences between their doctrines of love and established that Augustine's emphasis on human love in loving and ascending to God was explicitly biblical. For instance, the element Justice in conjunction with the element love in loving others derived from sources such as 1 Ep. John 2:1, 3:7. Augustine utilized the combination Love-Justice from Ep. John to show how human relations can be improved in compliance with the commandment 'Love Your Neighbor'. Yet we must first improve ourselves; and in order to do that, we must love God, the ultimate Good and Justice. We must also love others for their goodness, for their love of Justice in the sense of their honesty and trustworthiness. Moreover, Augustine stressed that Christ represented ultimate Justice and Charity -as in, among other things, his unfailing forgiveness of sins (*Trin.* IV.2.4, VIII.7.10). Additionally, in contrast to Plotinus, Augustine's emphasized the element love in conjunction with faith. Faith was necessary to love something or someone whom you did not know, in particular, God. Loving God would enhance seeing God. Augustine's doctrine of love was also accented by his advocating the practice of prayer. His "Prayer to the Trinity" demonstrated how love and desire brought one closer to God and to understanding what one believes. Moreover, the two aspects of having faith and praying, were not intended solely to be practiced by the individual, but in a collective context.

To complete this characterization of Augustine's Christian Platonism and to differentiate which aspects were purely Christian and Plotinian, it will be useful to determine from all the major points of difference in the analyses in Chapter VI which are the most important ones in relation to these two important points, contemplation and love, and which are distinctly biblical oriented.

In my view there are six. **The first** was the Christology described above, which involved the explicit human or personal element in the Godhead. A personal relationship was possible with the second

Trinitarian Person, who understood all the predicaments of human life. He was the source of all knowledge and also served as a manifestation of Trinitarian divine love. The **second** was Augustine's emphasis on loving others, in elaboration of the commandment "Love your neighbor", which he closely intermeshed with the experience of God's love so that loving God was equated with loving others. The **third** was Augustine's accentuation of the association of divine Love with Justice. The **fourth** major distinction based upon biblical reflection entailed Augustine's restructuring of Plotinus' notion of intellectual vision and marking the limitations involved in the ascent to God, as well as clarifying to what degree godliness or purity was attainable in this life. These distinctions were based upon, among other things, his stress on the various debilities of the human soul, which in turn were derived from his doctrine of original sin, inspired by the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis.³⁷ Further, he made a clear ontological distinction between the existence of creature and the Creator, which especially manifested in his explication of the ultimate union with God and the perfect intellectual vision in the afterlife after the resurrection. This conception was inspired by the letters of Paul. The **fifth** involved Augustine's vision of collective redemption. He gave more expression to spiritual love than Plotinus by articulating the importance of charity and friendships; by joining people together in communal living, in monastic life or as a church; striving together for the improvement of the soul and undergoing a collective redemption (Chapter VI.5.vi.f.). More than Plotinus, he recognized the difficulty of remembering God. This was his motivation for forming communities in which prayer and contemplation made up a large portion of one's daily life. Augustine's eschatology, the **sixth** point, was unambiguously biblical inspired, as it, too, was based upon statements in Paul's letters (Chapter VI.5.vi.e.).

Four out of the six differences deal directly with Augustine's doctrine of love. Augustine employed profusely Plotinus' doctrine of *Eros*, yet the elements above were non-existent in Plotinus' philosophy. As such, my conclusion is that Augustine's doctrine of love represents his most significant correction of Plotinian philosophy. His corrections of Plotinus' doctrine of *Eros* were definitely biblically inspired and Christian. In this respect and in consideration of all the other factors discussed thus far in this chapter, we can conclude that Augustine's Christian character outweighs his Plotinian, in spite of the numerous instances (gray areas) in which it appears to be a close tie.

A question was raised in Chapter V.1.v. which was left unanswered, which would complement the conclusions above and provide an appropriate closure of this study. Considering the characterization of Augustine's Christian Platonism above, what could we say about the readers whom Augustine had in mind when composing *Trin.*? For *Trin.* is clearly Augustine's most excellent expression of his Christian Platonism. Here his appraisal of Platonism is not as explicit or extensive as that in *Civ. Dei*. It addressed mainly the Platonists theurgists. Yet there were also some points which doubtlessly could have been addressed to Plotinus, such as the insufficiency of the Plotinian theory of contemplation of Ideas to provide insights into the history of mankind as well as a teleological vision for mankind's future. Furthermore, as pointed out in the sections above and in Chapter VI., the major doctrinal differences between Augustine's *imago Dei/Trinitatis* and Plotinus' intellect show Augustine's implicit correction of Plotinus. Especially concerning Plotinus' assertion of the divinity of the soul, which Augustine never mentioned in *Conf.* or *Civ. Dei*. Yet in *Trin.* he stressed the demarcation of the human intellect and the divine intelligence to such a degree that one could assume he was thinking of the discrepancies in the doctrine of intellect of his philosophical mentor.

It is more than obvious that Augustine was addressing a readership who had a strong literary and/or Platonist background. But could *Trin.* have been aimed at other Christian Platonists?

37 e.g.: *Gen. litt.* VI.20.31, 24-35, VIII.6.12.

Subordinationists? Or Plotinus or Porphyry followers? Like Wisse, it is my strong impression that Augustine wrote *Trin.* for persons like himself: religious intellectuals or philosophers with an affinity for Jesus Christ.³⁸ His message here is clear, that the only way to attain the Plotinian goals of acquiring divine knowledge and unification with the Godhead through love-, is through the *Verbum Dei*, the eternal Son of God who led a human life. He declared in *Trin.* IV that the road which post-Plotinian, Neo-Platonist theurgists tread, was a completely illusory, false and dangerous one. Only in this sense, could the *Trin.* be considered a Platonist polemic. In this respect, he could have been implying that these Platonists were better off if they had taken heed of Plotinus' critique of theurgy. Yet even Plotinus overlooked the important lessons of Christ. Augustine further implied in *Trin.* that the shortcomings of Plotinus' philosophy regarding the ultimate contemplation and love for the One could be amended by embracing the doctrine of love embodied by the incarnate Son of God as depicted in the New Testament. Christ was the only existing true Intermediary who brought the soul to the highest contemplation and union with God the Father. Through his exemplary human life, he could bring deliverance and redemption through his wisdom and love -what no benevolent demon or even an Hypostasis would ever or could ever do.

Thus Augustine's message in *Trin.* was: Platonists, go read the Scriptures (*tolle lege* revisited). There are passages there which refer to the same concepts in Plotinus' philosophy. Plotinus' philosophy even inadvertently aids in explaining some of them. Reading the *Trin.* might convince the readers to come to Augustine's church and hear his sermons, in the non-obligatory manner he himself did years before in Milan to listen to the sermons of Ambrose. Perhaps a conversion like his will take place -to an intense love relationship with Christ and a change of heart in appreciation of humility. Through Christianity, the heart will be purified much more effectively than the lofty but nebulous Platonist methods of both Plotinus and Porphyry. Christianity has the additional advantage that it will bring about a deeper sense of contentment in this life now, with Christ as personal support and guide.

5. Epilogue

What can the conclusions of this study tell us further about Augustine? Augustine is considered one of our most important church fathers, a biblical scholar, an authority of ecclesiastical dogma. As demonstrated here, his Plotinian way of thinking is undeniable and irrefutable. His admiration for conceptions expressed in practically the whole corpus of Plotinian philosophy is striking. What are we to make of this...that one of the greatest Early Christian thinkers was so enthralled with the pagan philosophic theology of this particular Platonist? In the past century, the church father's Plotinian orientation has been judged as negative by many theologians or scholars (for instance, for having incurred Christians to embrace 'otherworldliness'³⁹ and thereby deviate from the original biblical message).⁴⁰ Yet what can Augustine's Plotinian orientation tell us about Early Christianity and how his contemporaries regarded him?

38 *Participation*, Chapter 1: Theology. Wisse called these 'borderline Christians'. See Chapter V.1.v.

39 This study has shown that the impression of 'otherworldliness' in both Plotinus' and Augustine's philosophies had to do with the positing of a certain hierarchy of realities in which the material and physical was the lowest. This did not imply that either of these thinkers had a distaste for the physical or historical life/knowledge or advocated the negation of such. Instead it merely indicated an awareness of higher causal realities which were invisible to the human eye.

40 Critique of Augustine's thought by modern theologians was occasionally mentioned in the footnotes in this study yet this was essentially a subject which was deliberately avoided.

Of course we do not know if the bishop of Hippo's platonization of the bible conflicted with the biblical interpretation of his fellow theologians. Neither do we know whether this was even an issue for his parishioners or his admirers.⁴¹ It is likely that his major works were read by many -with *Confessions* at the top of the list of most popular-, as it is the most widely read of his works today. The well-educated readers of his major works did not necessarily represent the majority of Christians in Augustine's environment or in the whole Christian world where his books were disseminated. On the same line, we can assume that the number of persons who would have read *Trin.* in its entirety were probably fewer in number than those who had read *Conf.*

Augustine was a celebrity in his own time, he had been speech writer for the Emperor, his debating talent was well known: he was someone with a natural affinity for public speaking. We also know from Augustine himself that he had many public opponents and many of these opponents were even 'orthodox' Christians (not just Manichaeans, who were Gnostic Christians) who lived in his immediate vicinity, such as the supporters of Donatism. Debating ideas in their complexity and in detail, (which also sometimes entailed exaggerating the opponent's standpoint), flowed in his blood. The Roman Empire essentially brought forth a speech and debate culture, which found continuity in early Christian culture. This was most evident when the Empire came under Christian rule in the 4th century, epitomized by the international debates over Christian dogma at the councils which even persisted in later centuries. Augustine belonged very much to this intellectual, debate and speech culture.

We also know that Augustine had strong opinions which he defended with verve and style. But how resolute was Augustine in regard to his own opinions? To pursue this question as well as the inquiry above as to what this study can tell us about Early Christianity, let us turn our attention to Augustine's own words concerning his biblical exegesis, his interpretation of the creation story of Genesis in *Gen. litt. (The Literal Meaning of Genesis)*. Here, as we saw in Chapter IV, his borrowing of Plotinian conceptions was particularly evident. *Gen. litt* was namely his third attempt at an exegesis of Genesis, which he ultimately approved with satisfaction. While writing *Retractationes* at the end of his life, he looked back at *Gen. litt* and noted that this work actually brought forth more issues (*quaesita*) than solutions to them (*inventa*) and of the *inventa* only a few were *firmata*.⁴² In fact, as we saw in Chapter IV.1., he spoke of the difficulties of interpreting a God-inspired work, a work which sometimes contained enigmatic statements and was thus not always crystal clear (*Gen. litt* I.19.38, 20.40). Considering how Augustine posited that God himself cannot be described in human language or fathomed with our ordinary consciousness, that is, our normal way of thinking with physical images from which we acquired our worldly knowledge, (*Trin.* XV.7.13, etc.), we could assume that Augustine would have regarded the bible, being God's Word, generally the same: that the printed word should not always be taken literally or at face value. Yet he admitted throughout *Gen. litt* that the bible passages which presented interpretative problems could reveal a multitude of significances. For that reason, in *Gen. litt*, Augustine was continuously analysing the standpoints of others, subjecting his own views to a critical evaluation, then scrutinizing them from all possible angles, returning to issues in previous chapters, occasionally changing his mind and then correcting himself further along the way. In essence, he was demonstrating the intellectual processes involved in biblical interpretation. It seems that he wished to convey that these knotty results were in fact the proper product of biblical interpretation. Along the same train of thought, his love for the bible

41 At his conversion, his mother, who was not educated, was overjoyed. She accompanied him on his philosophic *otium* with his friends at the estate in Cassiciacum and even participated in the discussions (*Conf.* IX.3.5, 4.8, 8.17-end).

42 *Retract.* XXIV.24.

would have included not only the simplicity of its language but especially its enormous complexity. As we have also witnessed in this study, Augustine did not shy away from complications: he admired well-articulated and profound arguments of multi-faceted and profound issues. This would clarify as well one of the reasons he appreciated Plotinus' philosophy. It, like the bible, supplied appetizing nourishment for the mind.

In *Gen. litt* XII, where he interpreted the different kinds of divine visions depicted in Scripture, he demonstrated that the bible was full of spiritual meaning. His broad and thorough interpretation of 'being snatched up to the third Heaven' from Paul's letter to the Corinthians⁴³ testifies to his attitude that striving for a 'surface meaning' of the bible would not be a realistic endeavor and would even likely lead to erroneous conclusions.⁴⁴ The symbolic interpretative tradition of ancient texts (ancient in Augustine's time, such as Homer's *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* or the Jewish bible) was the spirit in which Augustine thrived and which he likely considered most noble. Thus he would have believed that in order to understand salvation history, one must recognize the allegorical nature of the bible (a good example is *Conf.* V.14.24) and the fact that the proper meaning of Scripture often needed to be fettered out. This was especially obvious in *Trin.* in how he dealt with confirming the equality of the three divine Trinitarian Persons with countless passages from the Old and New Testament. He often called upon the help of God praying for guidance and assistance to do so (as in *Conf.* XI.3.5 and *Trin.* IV.21.31, etc.).

Seeing Augustine's affinity for the allegorical interpretative tradition (*Conf.* V.14.24, *Gen. litt* I.1.1)⁴⁵ and its relative openness, it would be plausible that his fellow Christians' approval or disapproval of his interpretation, was not always a matter of much concern. The greatest concern was that he, or any Christian, preached the 'rules of faith' as he calls them several times in *Trin.* (e.g.: XV.28.51) which could consist of: the Trinitarian Godhead as an equal unity of three divine persons, the Incarnation pertaining to the second divine Person, the Son, the Word, and the thoroughly human character of his Incarnation.

The passages from *Trin.* (I.3.5-6) below epitomize Augustine's open attitude towards his own work: 'Accordingly, dear reader, whenever you are as certain about something as I am, go forward with me; whenever you stick equally fast seek with me; **whenever you notice that you have gone wrong, come back to me; or that I have, call me back to you.**'

Here, Augustine is inviting his readers to participate in his journey of searching and finding. His invitation is extended to those who are not convinced of the truth of his words, to come and see him and communicate his or her views. In *Trin.* III.1.2 Augustine specifies more strongly than here, that his readers should be his critics.⁴⁶

43 2 Cor. 12:2-4; *Gen. litt* XII.1.1-2.

44 He criticized the Manichaeans for their overly literal approach to the Old Testament which led to the misleading conception that Catholics maintained an anthropomorphic conception of God (*Conf.* III.7.12, V.14.24, VII.1.1).

45 'No Christian...will have the nerve to say that they (LZ: the divine Scriptures) should not be taken in a figurative sense,...' (*Gen. litt.* I.1.1; translation Hill). See also *Trin.* II.10.17, where he argues that the humanlike figure of God the Father in the Garden of Eden should not be understood in a literal manner.

46 'What I desire for all my works, of course, is not merely a kind reader but also a frank critic. This is peculiarly my desire for this work, treating it as it does of so tremendous a subject in which one wishes as many discoverers of truth could be found as it certainly has contradictions. **But the last thing I want is a reader who is my doting partisan, or a critic who is his own. The reader will not, I trust, be fonder of me than of the Catholic faith, nor the critic of himself than of Catholic truth.** To the first I say: "Do not show my works the same deference as the canonical scriptures. Whatever you find in scripture that you used not to believe, why, believe it instantly. But whatever you find in my works that you did not hitherto regard as certain, then unless I have really convinced you that it is certain, continue to have your doubts about it." To the second I say: "Do not criticize what I write by the standard of your own prejudices or contrariness, but by the divine text or incontrovertible reason. If you find any truth in it, then it does not belong to me just by being there, but rather to both of us by being understood and loved by us both. If you catch me out in anything that is not true, then I must own it for making the mistake, but from now on by being more careful, we can both repudiate its ownership." (*Trin.* III.1.2)

Let us continue with the passage above: *‘In this way, let us set out along Charity Street together, making for him of whom it is said, Seek his face always (Ps. 105.4). This covenant, both prudent and pious, I would wish to enter into in the sight of the Lord our God with all who read what I write, and with respect to all my writings, especially such as these where we are seeking the unity of three, of Father and Son and Holy Spirit. For nowhere else is a mistake more dangerous, or the search more laborious, or discovery more advantageous.’*

While accompanying him on his search of God, it is his wish that his readership will experience the Trinitarian Godhead with him. He is continuously using the words WE or US. The dangerous mistake he is speaking of could pertain to the subordinationist (heretical) standpoint, that Christ the Son is not equal to the Father (*Trin.* IV.21.31). Yet one must indeed seek this truth in Scripture (as he certainly does in *Trin.*). This laborious task involves spiritual exercises (*Trin.* IX-X) and the purification of the soul, which will enable the discoveries to be plentiful.

So whoever reads this and says, ‘This is not well said, because I do not understand it.’ is criticizing my statement, not the faith; and perhaps it could have been said more clearly-though no one has ever expressed himself well enough to be understood by everybody on everything. The person then who feels this grievance against my discourse should see if he can understand others who have busied themselves with such matters and such questions, when he fails to understand me. If so, let him lay my book aside (or throw it away if he prefers) and spend his time and effort on the ones he does understand. (Trin. I.3.5.)

Augustine defends that if he has not expressed himself clearly enough, he has still adhered to the rules of faith. Here he includes an amusing address to those who do not appreciate his convoluted writing style: they are free to put *Trin.* down and even throw it away if they prefer; and to search clarification elsewhere on the difficult subject of the Holy Trinity.

On the other hand, if anyone reads this work (Trin.) and says: “I understand what is being said, but it is not true.”, he is at liberty to affirm his own conviction as much as he likes and refute mine if he can. If he succeeds in doing so charitably and truthfully, and also take the trouble to let me know (if I am still alive⁴⁷) then that will be the choicest plum that could fall to me from these labors of mine. If he cannot do me this service, I would be only be too pleased that he should do it for anybody he can. All I am concerned with is to meditate on the law of the Lord, if not day and night at least at whatever odd moments I can snatch (Ps. 1:2) and to prevent forgetfulness from running away with my meditations by tying them down to paper; trusting in God’s mercy that he will make me persevering in all truths I am sure of, and that if in anything I am otherwise minded he will reveal this also to me himself (Phil. 3:15), either by hidden inspirations and reminders, or by his own manifest utterances, or by discussions with brethren.

That is what I pray for, that is my deposit and my heart’s desire, placed in the keeping of one who is a sufficiently reliable custodian of goods he himself has given and redeemer of promises he himself has made. ...Undoubtedly, though, it is required of me by the gentle authority of Christ’s

47 Hill’s comment on these passages: *‘History was to show that Augustine had good reason to enter this defense in advance (LZ: at the beginning of the work Trin.). He will be blamed-or praised- for being the fons et origo of almost as many uncatholic opinions and doctrines as have been fathered on the scriptures. This is more evidently so in matters to do with grace, predestination, and original sin than with the Trinity, but even here, as we have seen in the Introduction, he was subject to misunderstanding and straight incomprehension.’ (Trinity, 69, note 13)*

law, which is charity, that when people think I meant something false in my books which in fact I did not and this falsehood is disliked by one and welcomed by another, I should prefer to be censured by the censurer of falsehood than to receive its praiser's praises. (Trin. I.3.6)

The addressee here is the disagreeing reader. As mentioned above, in *Trin.* III.1.2 he expresses his hope that his readers will be his frank critics and not **doting partisans** who slavishly adhere to his perspective or prefer his exegesis to the Scriptures themselves. If the reader is of another conviction, he says, it is important that this conviction be made heard, even if he were no longer alive. As such, he does not portray himself as an ultimate authority on truth, or convey that his interpretative skills represent the last word on these matters. He does wish to portray himself as one whose sole intention is to meditate on the Lord's law and to persevere in these truths. This work on the divine Trinity which he is now tackling, which entails the mediation on the Lord's law or remaining focused on God-, is what he wishes to be considered the fruit of his labor. If, however, it turns out that he has made false claims, then he believes that God will convey this to him, or to others in some way.

Augustine surely recognized that his speech or written articulations were sometimes defensive and adamant. What he is basically pressing on in these passages is: I have done my best, if anyone else has a better idea on the Holy Trinity, let us please discuss it. Naturally, he also portrays himself as a defender of what he sees as truth; on the other hand, he declares himself as a mere explorer into truths of which we cannot be absolutely sure. For after all, what do humans really know about God, if He is unfathomable to the human mind? If you think that you have understood something about God, then what you understood has nothing to do with God (*Trin.* I.3.5; *Sermo* 117).

This, I consider the heart of Augustine's biblical exegesis: the word of God as chocked with spiritual and allegorical meaning, unearthed by a bold, inquisitive explorer, who longs for truth, seeking to know God. As to the veracity of his conclusions or opinions, he declared that only God can be the judge. If his viewpoint were to be proved false, he preferred the censure of such to the praise.

Regarding Plotinus' *Enneads*, we see a similar attitude: a public speaker and teacher who was eager to reveal his personal world view, yet with a vision of God which was paradoxical, enigmatic and predominantly incomprehensible to the finite human intellect. His attempts at expressing his profound experiences of the divine in words was necessarily cumbersome and unsystematic, because human language could not truly do justice to the representation of ultimate truths. We could say that this attitude of searching, exploring, formulating, re-formulating in order to define one's standpoint (which often remained paradoxical) was certainly the Plotinian legacy which Augustine welcomed with open arms.

Judging from Augustine's popularity in his time, a Plotinian approach to biblical interpretation in which elements of such were intricately integrated, was probably considered a fairly normal and not necessarily an eccentric phenomenon. This had to do with the general acceptance of allegorical interpretation. The fact that an individual's regard of the bible would deviate from others, was likely considered generally unproblematic, unless of course it deviated too far from the ground rules of faith.

I inquire then again, how should we regard Augustine's explorative and allegorical biblical exegesis with its Plotinian character, in which individual contemplation and divine illumination stands foremost; in which the search of the meaning of life entails the joy of exploring and discovering universal truth? Is this 'undesirable'? Should we also consider it undesirable that Augustine, an 'authoritative church figure' beckoned his readers and church members to accompany him in his search of God's face and to join in at the discussion table to debate these matters? I stand wholeheartedly behind Hill's commentary regarding Augustine's exhortation to his readers to be critical in *Trin.* III.1.2:

*'A most necessary attitude for any honest theologian, honest bishop, and honest Christian, an attitude that has been most wanting in Catholic theological and official circles.'*⁴⁸

If my study has been able to prove the positive effects of Augustine's Plotinian orientation which could be beneficial for Christians today, then I shall deem this dissertation a success.

48 (Hill, *Trinity*, 128, note 2)

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AUGUSTINE

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 (Civ. Dei) *De civitate Dei contra paganos libri viginti duo*: CC 47-48, CCL 47-48: 47 (1-10); 48 (11-22); CSEL: 40/1 (1-13); 40/2 (14-22)
 (Div. Qu): *Diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*: PL 40.11-100, CCL 44/A 11-249 / *Quaestio* 46: PL 40.29-31
 (Gen. litt): *De genesi ad litteram libri duodecim*: CSEL 28,1, 3-435; PL 34, 245-286
 (Trin.) *De trinitate libri quindecim*: CCSL 50-50A; 50: (1-12); 50A (13-15)

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Contra faustum manicheum libri triginta tres: csel 25/1
Acta contra fortunatum manicheum liber unus: csel 25/1
Contra secundinum manichaeum liber unus: csel 25/2
Contra epistulam manichaei quam vocant fundamenti liber unus: csel 25/1
De anima quantitate liber unus: CSEL 89
De beata vita: PL 32
De catechizandis rudibus: CCSL 46
De haeresibus ad quodultdeum liber unus: CCL 46
De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus manichaeorum libri duo: CSEL 90
Contra academicos-De academicis libri tres: CCSL 29, CSEL 63
De doctrina christiana: CCSL 32, CSEL 80
De duabus animabus liber unus: CSEL 25/1
De fide et de symbolo: CSEL 41
De genesi contra manichaeos libri duo: PL 34:
De genesi ad litteram liber unus imperfectus: CSEL 91
De immortalitate animae: PL 32
De libero arbitrio: CCSL 29, CSEL 74
De magistro liber unus: CCSL 29, CSEL 77
De musica: CSEL 25/2
De ordine libri duo: CCSL 29, CSEL 63
De uera religione liber unus: CCSL 32, CSEL 77/2
(Enn. Ps.) Enarrationes in psalmos: CCL 38 (1-50); 39 (51-100); 40 (101-150); CSEL 93/1A (1-17); 93/1B (18-32); 94/1 (51-60); 95/1 (101-109); 95/2 (110-118); 95/3 (119-133); 95/4 (134-140); 95/5 (141-150)
(Ep.) Epistulae 6, 7, 55, 92, 118, 120, 130, 147, 148, 187
In epistulam Iohannis ad Parthos tractatus decem: PL 35
(Io. eu. trakt) In Iohannis euangelium tractatus CXXXIV: CCL 36
Retractationum libri duo: CCSL 57; CSEL 36
Sermo 80: PL 38
Soliloquiorum libri duo: CSEL 89

PLOTINUS

Titles of the Enneads:⁴⁹

The Life of Plotinus, Vita Plotini

The First Ennead

- I.1 [53] - *What is the Living Being, and What is Man?*
- I.2 [19] - *On Virtues*
- I.3 [20] - *On Dialectic*
- I.4 [46] - *On Well Being*
- I.5 [36] - *On Whether Well Being Increases with Time*
- I.6 [1] - *On Beauty*
- I.7 [54] - *On the Primal Good and the Other Goods*
- I.8 [51] - *On What Are and Whence Come Evils*
- I.9 [16] - *On Going Out of the Body*

The Second Ennead

- II.1 [40] - *On Heaven (On the Universe)*
- II.2 [14] - *On the Movement of Heaven*
- II.3 [52] - *On Whether the Stars are Causes*
- II.4 [12] - *On Matter*
- II.5 [25] - *On What Exists Potentially and What Actually*
- II.6 [17] - *On Substance, or On Quality*
- II.7 [37] - *On Complete Transfusion*
- II.8 [35] - *On Sight, or on how Distant Objects Appear Small*
- II.9 [33] - *Against the Gnostics*

The Third Ennead

- III.1 [3] - *On Destiny*
- III.2 [47] - *On Providence (I)*
- III.3 [48] - *On Providence (II)*
- III.4 [15] - *On our Allotted Guardian Spirit*
- III.5 [50] - *On Love*
- III.6 [26] - *On the Impassibility of the Things Without Body*
- III.7 [45] - *On Eternity and Time*
- III.8 [30] - *On Nature and Contemplation and the One*
- III.9 [13] - *Various Considerations*

The Fourth Ennead

- IV.1 [21] - [2] *On the Essence of the Soul (I)*
- IV.2 [4] - [1] *On the Essence of the Soul (II)*
- IV.3 [27] - *On Difficulties About the Soul (I)*

49 The titles utilized here are from Armstrong's translation (1989) which is the primary translation utilized in this study. I have added the chronological numbering here because the conventional way of referring to particular treatises of the *Enneads* in some countries -such as France- are by citing these numbers.

- IV.4 [28] - *On Difficulties About the Soul (II)*
- IV.5 [29] - *On Difficulties About the Soul (III) Or On Sight*
- IV.6 [41] - *On Sense-Perception and Memory*
- IV.7 [2] - *On the Immortality of the Soul*
- IV.8 [6] - *On the Descent of the Soul into Bodies*
- IV.9 [8] - *If All Souls Are One*

The Fifth Ennead

- V.1 [10] - *On the Three Primary Hypostases*
- V.2 [11] - *On the Origin and Order of the Beings Which Come After the First*
- V.3 [49] - *On the Knowing Hypostases and That Which is Beyond*
- V.4 [7] - *How That Which is After the First Comes from the First, and on the One*
- V.5 [32] - *That the Intelligibles are not Outside the Intellect, and on the Good*
- V.6 [24] - *On the Fact that That That Which is Beyond Being Does not Think, and on What is the Primary and What the Secondary Thinking Principle*
- V.7 [18] - *On the Question Whether There are Ideas of Particulars*
- V.8 [31] - *On the Intelligible Beauty*
- V.9 [5] - *On Intellect, the Forms, and Being*

The Sixth Ennead

- VI.1 [42] - *On the Kinds of Being (I)*
- VI.2 [43] - *On the Kinds of Being (II)*
- VI.3 [44] - *On the Kinds of Being (III)*
- VI.4 [22] - *On the Presence of Being, One and the Same, Everywhere as a Whole I*
- VI.5 [23] - *On the Presence of Being, One and the Same, Everywhere as a Whole II*
- VI.6 [34] - *On Numbers*
- VI.7 [38] - *How the Multitude of the Forms Came Into Being: and on the Good*
- VI.8 [39] - *On Free Will and the Will of the One*
- VI.9 [9] - *On the Good, or the One*

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OUTLINE (Long version)

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1. Augustine and Plotinus on Imaging the Divine

2. The Organization of Subject Matter in this Study

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- a. Augustine's Youth
- b. Manichaeism and Ascent to the Light
- c. Attractive Elements of Manichaeism for Augustine
- d. Augustine's (Platonist) Critique of Manichaeism
- e. Augustine's Post-Manichaean Intellectual Development
- f. The Influence of Ambrose

ii. Augustine's Appraisal of Platonism

- a. Platonist 'Son of God' (Who is not Christ)
- b. The Plotinian Immaterial Divine and the Absolute Good
- c. The Inward Turn and the Ascent (1)
- d. Conversion and *Verbum Dei*
- e. The Ascent (2)
- f. Evaluation: Augustine's Points of Critique of the Plotinian ascent and the Divinity of the Soul
- g. Summary of Augustine's Points of Critique
- h. Evaluation of Augustine's Critique in *Conf.*

2. Augustine on Plato and the Platonists in *Civ. Dei* and *Trin.*

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ii. Augustine's Critique of Platonism in *Civ. Dei*: Theurgy and Demonology

iii. Augustine's Praise of the Platonists

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- b. Their Correct Understanding of God
- c. The Platonist Notion of Immaterial Human Mind
- d. Plato's Doctrine of Ideas/Forms
- e. Plato on Virtue, Wisdom and Love of God
- f. Plotinus on Light
- g. Plotinus on Providence, Beauty and *Visio Dei*
- h. On the Son of God in the Triune Godhead

iv. Critique of the Contemplation of the Ideas in *Trin.* IV

3. Evaluation of Sections 1 and 2

- i. Continuity and Discontinuity: *Conf.* and *Civ. Dei*
- ii. Conclusions-Augustine as Platonist
- iii. The Problematic Position of the Divinity of the Soul

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- ii. *The Enneads*

2. Images in Plotinus' Theogony and Cosmology

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ii. Theogony

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- b. The Divine Intellect (*Nous*)
- c. The Divine All-Soul
- d. Plotinus' Ontology: the Relationship between Two Worlds
- e. Imaging: the Intelligible World: Forms and Ideas
- f. Imaging by Process of Formation the Ideas and the *Logos/Logoi*
- g. Synopsis: Plotinus' Doctrine of the *Logos* and the *Logoi* in the Process of Imaging

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- a. Making Material Images: Joining Form to Matter
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 - a. Two Kinds of Knowledge
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- c. *Eros*: Human Love on the Physical Level
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- ii. The Creator: Perfect Image and Source of the Ideas: Eternal Creation Principles
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- vii. Augustine's Definition of Image
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 - a. Introduction
 - b. Original Sin and the Human Will
 - c. Sin, Pride in the Context of Love and Knowledge
 - d. *Imago Dei*, Eschatology and Resurrection
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- ii. Contemplation of the Ideas (*De Ideis*)
- iii. *Visio intellectualis* (*Gen. litt.* XII)
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 - b. Augustine's Definition of Three Visions
 - c. Characteristics of the *Visio Intellectualis*
- iv. Synthesis of Augustine's Accounts of the Ascent
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- ii. The Treatment of *Imago Dei* in *Trin.* Compared to *Gen. litt.*
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- iv. Secondary Literature
- v. Readership

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- i. Clarification of the Son and his Incarnation
- ii. Clarification of the Holy Spirit
- iii. Trinitarian Ontology: God's Equality in Substance and Essence
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- v. God is Love, God is Good
- vi. The Holy Spirit and the Holy Trinity is Love
- vii. Synthesis: God is Intelligible and Incomprehensible

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- c. Augustine's Analysis of the Human, Mental Trinities (books IX-X, XII-XV)
- d. *Imago Trinitatis*: a Unity of Mind-Self-Knowledge and Self-Love (books IX-X)
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- f. Excursus on Love and Knowledge in Modern and Ancient Terminology

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- b. Self-Knowledge (*Trin.* VIII-X)
- c. True Knowledge and the *Verbum Intimum*, the Inner Word (*Trin.* VIII-X)
- d. Self-Knowledge and Truth: the Different 'Selves' (*Trin.* X-XI)
- e. Sense Perception and Material Images (the Outer Man) (*Trin.* XI)
- f. Lower and Higher Knowledge: Interior Man (*Trin.* XII and XIII) *Ratio Superior/ Inferior - Scientia/Sapientia*
- g. Faith and Future Knowledge (Searching and Finding)
- h. Synthesis of sections ii and iii: the *imago Trinitatis*: Intellect and Epistemology

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- a. Introduction: Defining the Frontiers of the Element Love.
- b. Augustine's Terminology of 'Love'
- c. Augustine's Sources for his Doctrine of Love
- d. God-Trinity as Love
- e. *Amor* in the Human Image of the Trinity (*Trin* VIII-X)
- f. Love-Longing-Searching (Synthesis)

- g. Self-Love and Longings: Between Truth and Delusion
- h. Longing and Prayer Related to the Doctrine of *Imago Trinitatis*
- i. Synthesis-Love

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- i. Introduction General Aspects
- ii .Summaries
 - a. The *Imago Trinitatis* as Reflection of the Holy Trinity
 - b. Epistemological Ascent in *Trin.*
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 - d. God's Intelligibility and Incomprehensibility
- iii. Augustine's Ascent in *Trin*: How Far Can One Unite with God?
 - a. Eschatology and the Vision of God
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- ii. Triune Godhead
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- iv. The Second Divine Person: *Verbum-Nous*: the Axis of Cosmology and Redemption
- v. Divine Mediation: *Logos* and *Verbum*
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- viii. Differences
 - a. A Personal Relationship
 - b. Hierarchical-Vertical vs. Equal-Horizontal
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 - a. Definition of Image and Imaging
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- ii. Epistemology
 - a. Introduction
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 - c. Intellectual Vision
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 - e. Self-Knowledge
 - f. The Lower and Higher Level of the Mind/the Selves
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- b. Augustine's Human Mental Triads
- c. Augustine's Christological Orientation
- d. Faith, Scripture, Revelation
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- f. On the Divinity of the Soul
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- h. On the Divinity of the Soul (2)
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- ii. Summaries on Love
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 - b. Augustine
- iii. General Correspondences
 - a. Human Love
 - b. Love in the Godhead
- iv. Differences
 - a. The Personal Human Element in the Godhead of Love
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- iv. Synthesis of section 4 on Love

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- i. Introduction
- ii. Plotinus: The Epistemological Ascent and the Ascent by Love:
- iii. Augustine on the Ascent
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- v. Gray Areas
 - a. Self-Actualization
 - b. Divinity of Soul
- vi. Major Differences
 - a. Christ's Assistance in Contemplation
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6. Synthesis of the Analyses of this Chapter

- i. Overview of Conclusions Concerning the Major Differences

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2. Augustine's Critique of Platonism from Chapter II and Review of Conclusions

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- ii. How a Platonist?
- iii. Augustine's Relationship to Platonism (*Conf.* and *Civ. Dei*)
- iv. Conclusions

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